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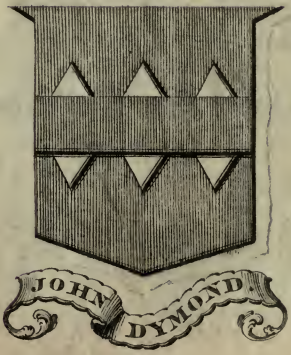

Mrs Opie.

Religious Tract Society, 1855.

MEMOIR

OF

AMELIA OPIE;

BY

CECILIA LUCY BRIGHTWELL.

"Still thankful alike, if the thorn or the rose
Was strew'd on the pathway that led *her* to God."
LAYS FOR THE DEAD.

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PREFACE.

It seems desirable, in bringing out a short Memoir of Mrs. Opie, under the auspices of the Religious Tract Society, to preface it by a few observations, introductory and explanatory.

The present Life differs, in some essential respects, from the larger "Memorials;" having for its object more particularly the record of Mrs. Opie's religious history; and, consequently, it will be found to contain but a general summary of the events of the earlier years of her life.

Since the publication of the former work, I have received many pleasing letters, and extracts from correspondence, communicated to me by the friends of Mrs. Opie, which have been thought likely to interest the general reader, and to bring out into clearer light the character of the departed, as a Christian woman.

While I do not desire to convey the impres-

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sion, that in writing this short Memoir, I feel the wish to retract or alter anything I have given in the "Memorials," I avow the hope and the expectation, that there will be found in this little volume much additional and interesting material. It is, therefore, with pleasure I indulge the belief that it will, through the medium of this Society, be put within the reach of a far larger number of readers than it could otherwise have obtained.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words with reference to the sterling character of Mrs. Opie's religious views and conduct. There can be no stronger test of the genuine nature of a change of heart, than corresponding life and action; and while, in her case, there was simple reliance on the great fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith in the Redeemer, there was a "bright evidence" that this faith was genuine in the fruits it produced.

For proof of this I must refer to the narrative given in these pages, and I may further say, that the character of Mrs. Opie's religious reading, and of her favourite devotional authors, also showed the soundness of her views. Dr.

Chalmers' "Horæ Sabbaticæ," was one of the books in which she principally took delight during the latter period of her life; and the various marks of approval and feeling, traced by her pencil, in the volumes she read, show the bent of her heart and mind.

I know not that any doubt has ever been entertained of the sincerity and truthfulness of Mrs. Opie, in the change she adopted, when she left the world, and gave herself to Christ as his disciple. The old reproach has indeed been uttered by one critic, who says, "When she began to grow elderly, Amelia Opie became *dévote*." Beneath the sting lies the honey-bag; and this trite sneer will only assure the Christian reader that the object of it had not offered in vain the prayer of the psalmist, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

C. L. Brightwell,
Norwich.

LIFE OF AMELIA OPIE.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is, perhaps, no kind of reading more universally interesting than biography, or "life-writing"—as that word signifies. Some of the most ancient literary compositions in existence are works of biography, or of mixed biography and history. The historical parts of the Old Testament are the most remarkable examples of the kind, and are everywhere intermixed with records of the lives of individuals; in some instances, the composition is purely biographical, as in the case of the book of Ruth. Who has not delighted himself in that record of true friendship, so pure and disinterested—so abiding and faithful? Fresh with Nature's own breath, that world-old tale is ever new and attractive. The old and the young alike take pleasure in it; and all hearts respond to the touching appeal: "Entreat me not to leave

thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."*

The life-history of every man, indeed, could it be faithfully given, would, in all probability, be found to contain some points of interest peculiar to itself, and distinct in character from the experience of all others: so that a lesson of teaching, encouragement, or warning might be learned thence, and good might result from a discriminating reflection upon its record. The consciousness of this general love for biography, and the eager interest we all take in the experience of each other, have prompted multitudes to relate that which they have themselves seen and done, or induced them, in case they have been conversant with individuals of note and celebrity, to give to the world their recollections of the distinguished persons with whom they have associated.

It is from a feeling of this kind that I offer to the readers of this little volume some remembrances of one who will ever be dear to those who knew her, and the history of whose long and eventful life is full of much instruction and entertainment. I refer to the late Amelia Opie, an authoress whose earlier poems and tales procured her a reputation in the world of letters, which is still maintained after the lapse of half a century, and whose

* Ruth i. 16, 17.

later works—of a very different character—show the honesty and truthfulness of her renewed heart, and her sincere desire to do good. The principal of these productions is a series of tales, illustrative of the vice of lying; and this book has been, and is still, extensively read in America, in which country it is acknowledged to have been widely useful, having found its way into the cottages of "the interior," where it is to be seen, "thumbed by frequent use."

It is not, however, as an authoress that I wish to present Mrs. Opie to my readers; my object is, rather to trace, in the experience of her life, the goodness of God, and the infinite superiority of religious principle to the highest attainments of nature, as well as the superior happiness it yields over all that the world can bestow on its votaries. In the endeavour to illustrate these points, I shall, almost necessarily, make a division of the memoir into the two periods into which her life seems naturally to fall. The earlier and longer part of her history was one of youthful enjoyment, successful aspiration, and worldly distinction; when she drank the full cup of earthly joy, and tasted, with a glad spirit, the happiness of youth, health, prosperity, and "all that earth calls good and great."

Of this period of her life I cannot speak from personal knowledge; my acquaintance with her dates from a far later time, when she had long

retired from the gay circles of the world; and when, taught by experience, she could say, "I would not exchange this sitting at the foot of the cross for all the gaieties I once enjoyed." But, though unable to narrate, from personal knowledge, the history of her early days, I am possessed of authentic information respecting them, and have heard from her own lips many particulars of their most striking and memorable events; for she loved to go back, on Memory's swift wings, to the days of "auld lang syne," and would frequently while away the hours in graphically depicting the scenes and personages of former times.

Amelia Alderson was the only child of a physician of some note, in the old cathedral town of Norwich, in which place she was born, November 12th, 1769. Her mother, Amelia, was the daughter of Joseph Briggs, of Cossambaza, up the Ganges. This gentleman was the son of Dr. Henry Briggs, rector of Holt, in Norfolk, and went over, in the Company's service, to Bengal. He died in India, May, 1747. His widow did not survive him many months, and their infant daughter and only child was brought back to England, and committed to the care of her father's family; and there are still in existence several letters from her paternal uncle relative to the transfer of the child, which breathe a spirit of devout piety, and affectionate interest in the helpless orphan.

Mrs. Opie has been heard to say, that many of her "relations on the mother's side had been united for generations past to the Wesleyan Methodists;" and I mention this circumstance, because it is delightful to indulge in the thought, that the promises of God, made to the children of the righteous, "even to the third and fourth generations," were fulfilled in the present instance.

It appears that Mrs. Opie's mother was a woman of good sense and judgment, and that she endeavoured early to teach her child obedience and self-denial. "Her word was law;" and though fragile in health, she seems to have been gifted with much natural strength of character. She died when her daughter was yet a girl, but it was perceptible, even to the latest period of Mrs. Opie's life, that the influence exerted by her mother never faded from the daughter's memory, but left indelible traces there; and not unfrequently would she speak of her mother with respect and veneration. One of the most touching of Mrs. Opie's "Lays for the Dead" was called forth by this filial affection, and, in a short narrative of her own earlier days, she speaks of the judicious training of her mother, saying she was as "firm from principle, as she was gentle in disposition." Happy, indeed, would it have been for both mother and child, had the seeds of early piety been sown in that tender and susceptible heart; but there is no evidence that such was the case; and while we cannot but feel the wish to know more of the

mother of Mrs. Opie, we are compelled to acknowledge, with regret, that in the scanty information we have, no mention is made of the religious training of her child.

Having referred to a record of Mrs. Opie's childish days, I will quote, from this interesting fragment, a little incident with which it opens, very characteristic of the natural love for the beautiful, and the sweet temper of the writer. She says: "One of my earliest recollections is, of gazing on the bright blue sky, as I lay in my little bed, before my hour of rising came, and listening with delighted attention to the ringing of a peal of bells. I had heard that heaven was beyond those blue skies, and I had been taught that *there* was the home of the good; and I fanced that those sweet bells were ringing in heaven. What a happy error! Neither illusion nor reality, at any subsequent period of my life, ever gave me such a sensation of pure, heartfelt delight, as I experienced, when, morning after morning, I looked on that blue sky, and listened to those bells, and fancied that I heard the music of the home of the blessed, pealing from the dwelling of the Most High. Well do I remember the excessive mortification I felt when I was told the truth, and had the nature of bells explained to me; and though I have since had to awake often from illusions that were dear to my heart, I am sure that I never woke from one with more pain than I experienced when forced

to forego this sweet illusion of my imaginative childhood."

This lively imagination was shown in various ways, when she was still quite young, and was joined to an eager curiosity and love of excitement, of which she has related various instances. She early gave signs of some of the peculiar tastes and propensities which afterwards characterized her. One of the most remarkable of these, was an eager interest in insane persons; and her sympathies being excited on their behalf, she delighted in frequently visiting them and bestowing on them little presents of pence, and flowers. Once, during a visit to the interior of a lunatic asylum, she was so much struck by the appearance of a patient, whom she observed gazing at her with earnest and melancholy interest—"a world of woe" written in his looks—that she said, "This poor man and his expression never left my memory; and I thought of him when, at a later period, I attempted to paint the feelings I imputed to him, in the "Father and Daughter." When very young, too, she became a frequenter of the assize courts at Norwich, delighting in the excitement of the trials there;—thus early evincing a taste she ever after retained; but which, it will be seen, at the latter period of her life, was brought under the influence of higher motives than mere curiosity, or the love of excitement.

Still a girl at the time of her mother's death,

Miss Alderson was placed by that event at the head of her father's household, and introduced into the very gay society of the Norwich circles of that day. Dr. Alderson naturally delighted in his daughter's talents. He made her his constant companion, and to his instructions she was, in a great degree, indebted for the information and acquirements, which qualified her to take a part in entertaining the numerous and clever guests whom he gathered round him. It was a perilous situation for a young girl, deprived of a mother's watchful care, and without the loving influence and support of other female relatives. There was plenty to delight her lively, joyous temperament, but she needed the salutary checks which maternal influence would have exerted, and for the want of which even the devoted attachment of her proud father could not compensate.

High spirits, uninterrupted health, a lively fancy, and mental vigour, were natural advantages she possessed, and fully enjoyed and exercised. To these she added great musical talent, and excelled to a most remarkable degree in that expressive style of ballad-singing, which seems no longer to be cultivated in these days of musical science. "Those only who have heard her can conceive the effect she produced in the performance of her own ballads," said one of her early friends; and this charming gift she exerted in the days of her greatest success in society; on one occasion being honoured to sing to

the Prince Regent. This fact reminds me, that, after Mrs. Opie's death, among the relics carefully treasured in Dr. Alderson's writing desk, was found a pair of faded gloves, which had been worn by his daughter on that memorable occasion. Another of Miss Alderson's early tastes was a love of the drama;—when not more than eighteen years of age she wrote a tragedy, which she afterwards assisted in acting for the amusement of her friends. It was, probably, owing to this taste, that she early formed an acquaintance with the Kemble family, and became intimate with the celebrated Mrs. Siddons.

A visit to London in 1794, introduced Miss Alderson to many celebrated characters. That was a period of revolutionary ferment and unparalleled political excitement; and Dr. Alderson's views being those of the ultra-liberal party, his daughter's were naturally formed in accordance with them. She attended the famous trials of Horne Tooke, Holcroft, and others, for high treason, and wrote accounts of them to her father, full of passionate interest and zeal on behalf of the accused.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Opie was a warm sympathizer with the lower orders, though she had many friends in the higher circles. She was never, at any period, untrue to this early-formed bias, exhibiting a practical habit of tenderness towards those who have to bear a large share of the heavier burdens of life.

It is evident, that a fellowship in political opinions was the only bond which united Miss Alderson to many of those with whom, at this time, she associated. Her good sense, and firm rectitude of moral principle, happily preserved her from the follies and errors into which not a few of those around her were led, by their extravagant zeal for a liberty which speedily degenerated into licence; and although she might, sometimes, be betrayed by her native ardour into imprudence, her own standard of duty ever remained pure and high.

The following year found Miss Alderson again entering into the exciting pleasures of the society to which she had gained access. Many of the French emigrants, the victims of the great Revolution, were at that time in London, and among them were men of high standing, and literary talent and repute. The celebrated Count de Lally Tollendal, and the Duc d'Aiguillon, formed an acquaintance with the lively and charming young Englishwoman, which they afterwards carried on in correspondence; and she wrote, as usual, to her Norwich friends, telling of all the gay round of visits and amusements in which she shared. Still, she was not wholly blinded to the frivolity of much she joined in, but spoke of the scene as "a *wilderness* of pleasure, in which fruits and flowers disputed with *weeds*."

Intellectual intercourse with Mrs. Barbauld,

Mr. Wrangham, Mr. Rogers, Dr. Geddes, and many others of the same stamp, was the principal attraction to her, and she was always on the alert to gain instruction and information, which she stored up for after use. At length, during one of her London visits, she formed an acquaintance which was destined to affect her future history for life. In the house of a mutual friend, she was introduced, one evening, to the painter Opie, then enjoying a considerable degree of popular favour. He was charmed and fascinated at first sight, and pursued with eager earnestness the suit which he instantly commenced. At first there seemed doubts of his success, but eventually she inclined to accept his proposal, and in the month of May, 1798, Mr. Opie and Miss Alderson were married at Marylebone church.

From the glimpses we gain of Mr. Opie in the Memoir, prefixed by his wife to the Lectures, published after his decease, we perceive much that is estimable in his private and domestic character; and the letters she wrote during her married life bear strong testimony to his honourable and truthful character, to his feeling of love for his profession, and to his general worth and natural kindness. He delighted to spend his leisure hours in conversation with the woman to whom his heart had surrendered itself at the first moment of their meeting. He endeavoured to instruct and improve her mind and talents; he encouraged her to exer-

cise her natural powers, as an author, and always waged war against the indulgence of idleness and frivolous pursuits; and she repaid his affection by a sincere regard, and a warm delight in his genius and superior sense. "Knowing," she says in the memoir of her husband, "at the time of our marriage, that my most favourite amusement was writing, he did not check my ambition to become an author; on the contrary, he complained not that I wrote so much, but that I did not write more and better. Idleness was the fault he most blamed in both sexes; and I shall ever regret that I did not write more, when it was in my power to profit by his criticisms and advice; and when, by employing myself more regularly in that manner, I should have been sure to receive the proudest and dearest reward of woman, the approbation of a husband at once the object of her respect and love."

Thus urged, Mrs. Opie gave to the world her first acknowledged publication, the "Father and Daughter." It appeared in the year 1801, and was received with much warmth of approval by the public at large, as well as by the more critical judgment of the reviewers of "The Edinburgh," and of men of genius and repute. Sir Walter Scott declared, that he had shed more tears over that tale than he had ever done over such things. It was translated into almost every European language, and was afterwards taken as the ground-

work of a popular Italian opera of the time—the "Agnese" of Paer. The next year Mrs. Opie published a volume of "Poems," which were thus characterized by the celebrated critic, Dr. Brown: "The verses of feeling, on which Mrs. Opie must rely for the establishment of her fame, are certainly among the best in our opuscular poetry."

In the midst of these scenes of domestic happiness, and successful effort, there were clouds gathering around the painter and his wife, which occasioned anxiety and care for the future. Mr. Opie's talents were not rewarded by so much remunerative employment as they deserved, and after a time, obtained. Despondency occasionally possessed his mind, and dark broodings overshadowed his spirit. His aspiring mind yearned after professional excellence, and never rested in present attainments. And now the hopeful spirit of his wife sustained him. She was sanguine in temperament, and cheerful by nature, and well and happily ministered to him by encouraging his flagging spirits.

In time these difficulties were surmounted, and, she says in her Memoir, "a torrent of business set in towards him, which never ceased to flow till the day of his death."

One of the very few relaxations which Mr. Opie allowed to himself, was a visit to the French capital, and great was the delight which this journey occasioned his wife. She beheld the great masterpieces of art then assembled at the Louvre by the

victorious arms of Napoleon. She gazed with admiring eyes on that mighty conqueror himself, and saw and conversed with her political idol, Charles James Fox. Many persons of note, including the Polish hero, Kosciusko, were introduced to her acquaintance, and the days were too short to accomplish the various schemes of amusement and pleasure with which she filled the hours. Her health and spirits were boundless, and her enjoyment fully equal to both.

Seventeen years after, Mrs. Opie again visited France, and as, looking back at the past, she recalled with mingled emotions the widely different circumstances under which she first saw those shores, filled with grateful feelings, she exclaimed, "When I again beheld Calais, and recollected what I was when I first saw it in 1802, I felt overwhelmed and humbled with a sense of being richer, wiser, and happier in one sense than I was then; for I had learned to know my Saviour, and not as a Teacher and a Prophet only, but as the Redeemer—as Him who died that I might live, and through whose merits alone I am to be saved. Glory be to the Most High for this greatest of all his mercies!"

Returning from this delightful journey, Mr. and Mrs. Opie resumed the usual routine of their life, and the pen and the pencil were industriously exercised. She produced some new tales, and frequently visited her Norwich friends; her letters to whom, when she was in London, were filled

with accounts of all the various incidents she judged worthy of record, and varied with descriptions of the "celebrities" to whom she had access. "In her own house," said her early friend, Mrs. J. Taylor, "where Mr. Opie's talents drew a constant succession of the learned, the gay, and the fashionable, she delighted all by the sweetness of her manners, and the unstudied and benevolent politeness with which she adapted herself to the taste of each individual."

These days passed swiftly away, and all seemed to promise fair for the future. The talents of her husband had now obtained for him both fame and success, and his happy wife wrote: "He now saw himself justly rewarded for all his labour and perseverance; his circumstances were such as to enable us to have more of the comforts and elegancies of life." . . . . In short, the hill of worldly prosperity was climbed, and the difficulty of the ascent conquered. The labour and anxiety, however, had told upon the health, and undermined the energies, of the successful man of genius; and in the spring of the year 1807, just nine years after his marriage, Mr. Opie, after a few weeks' illness, sank and died. His wife did all that was in her power to soothe and comfort him. Alas! she could not point the eye of the sufferer to the only true source of hope—to the Saviour of sinners. She did not know the only refuge of the soul in the hour of calamity; she had not learned the

lesson of believing confidence in Jesus as the way of safety, of holiness, and of peace—the lesson which, by God's grace and mercy, she was taught in after years, when, under a similar affliction, (the last illness of her father,) she wrote, "I humbly hope, that in my hour of need, if it should come, I shall be permitted to feel that 'my help cometh from the Lord; and that, though I walk in the midst of trouble, he will deliver me.'"

There is something exceedingly touching and painful in the history of Mr. Opie; and it is probable that my readers, as they drop a tear of regret over his untimely end, may utter, in their hearts, the words of the wise "preacher" of old, and say, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"* Should they stop there, they will but learn the melancholy lesson, that all the joys of earth, and all its works and deeds, perish and come to nought—are, indeed, nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity:—

> "False as the smooth, deceitful sea,
> And empty as the whistling wind."

But the Christian will go further; he will remember the words of the Lord Jesus, and the solemn question he put, which none on earth, or under the earth, has ever been able to answer, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"†

* Eccl. i. 2, 3. † Mark viii. 36.

That inquiry is still put by the Saviour to all who, sinking beneath the labours of earth, or goaded to sacrifice everything in pursuit of its rewards, ask, in the bitterness of disappointment, "Who will show us any good?" To them the voice of love says, "What shall it profit you, though you gain all that you pant to acquire, if the one thing needful be not yours? Seek *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all things else shall then be added unto you."

CHAPTER II.

After Mr. Opie's death, his widow returned to her early home, and continued during the remainder of Dr. Alderson's life to live with him. Her attachment to her father was of an ardent and devoted character; she loved him with an intense affection, and as he was the only object united to her by the dearest ties of nature, all her tenderness seemed to be concentrated upon him. It was now her duty and delight to cheer and soothe his declining years, and love and duty joined to aid her in the performance of the task. For a while her intercourse with the world and its society was laid aside. She gave her time and thoughts to quiet literary labours, published her husband's lectures, with her memoir of him, and wrote a second volume of poems.

After a period of retirement, she resumed her intercourse with London friends, and visited the metropolis, usually in the spring of each year. Her letters and reminiscences (the latter were written several years after the events they recorded) are full of lively pictures of the personages and events of the time. Many of those who figure in them are names of the first celebrity: Lord

Erskine and Madame de Staël, Sheridan, Lord Byron, Sir James Mackintosh, Mrs. Siddons, Baron Humboldt, and many others, were there, witty, brilliant, learned, and attractive, contributing of their various stores to the general fund of enjoyment. These yearly visits to London did not interfere with Mrs. Opie's literary pursuits. She continued diligently to use her pen, and in the year 1812 published "Temper"—a tale, in which she adopted more the character of a moralist, aiming at practical usefulness; and she had the satisfaction of receiving assurances that it had exerted a beneficial influence on some of her readers. In the following year appeared the "Tales of Real Life," and we mention them, especially from the wish to say, that the one entitled "Love and Duty" was a favourite with herself—a fact incidentally mentioned by her at an evening party, when she was told that a young friend, who had hoped to meet her on that occasion, was consoling herself by reading this tale. With great *naïveté*, Mrs. Opie acknowledged that these early productions of her mind still possessed an interest for her, and she added, that "Love and Duty" was her favourite among them.

We now pass on to the summer of the year 1814, when, to use her own words, "the emperor of Russia, the king of Prussia, and other royal and distinguished foreigners, were, as everybody knows, in London." It was a stirring time, and she was

present, amidst all the gaiety and whirl, chasing the imperial strangers when they appeared in public, sharing in the gay amusements of her friends,—balls, and masquerades, and concerts; and on Sundays, alas! receiving her guests, and doing as the multitude around her did, not observing "the ordinances of the Lord, nor obeying his commandments."

From the midst of all this worldliness and vanity Mrs. Opie was suddenly and painfully summoned, by an event which excited deep feeling in her heart, and which must have been the more impressive and distressing, by the contrast in which it stood with all that had occupied her thoughts during the months of her absence from home. Among the friends of her early days were the well-known and much-honoured family of the Gurneys. Her intercourse with them dated from a very early period, and when Mrs. Fry, on her marriage, settled in London, Mrs. Opie visited her there. After her return to Norwich, on the death of her husband, she resumed her former habits of intimacy with the family at Earlham, and formed a warm friendship with Priscilla, the youngest sister, whose lovely and Christian character especially endeared her to those around her, and whose influence on Mrs. Opie, combined with that of her brother, the admirable and lamented Joseph John Gurney, appears to have been the principal means of producing that gradual change of sentiment which eventually led

to her joining the Society of Friends. The melancholy event of which we have spoken as the occasion of Mrs. Opie's sudden recall from her London visit, was the death of Mr. John Gurney, the elder brother of Mr. Joseph John Gurney. He had been for some time in a declining state of health, but the end seems to have been unexpectedly rapid, and happened precisely at this period. To the memory of this lamented friend, Mrs. Opie dedicated the second of her "Lays for the Dead," which was written (as she says in the title to it) after attending his funeral in the Friends' burying-ground at Norwich; she having travelled all night in order to arrive in time.

From this period Mrs. Opie attended the religious services of the Friends; and continued to do so until she united herself to their communion, eleven years after; and in a note, written the year of Mr. Gurney's death, (1847,) to the writer of these pages, she says, "In 1814 I left the Unitarians." It does not appear, indeed, that she was ever in actual communion with that body. It seems most likely that in her youth she had no settled opinions on religious subjects; and that the mere circumstances of her birth and education associated her with the Unitarians. One thing is evident, from the whole tenor of her conversation, as well as from her subsequent acknowledgment, when she had been brought to know "the grace of God, in truth," that at this time she had not

experienced the great vital change of which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke in these impressive words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." From this period, however, as we have said, she ceased to attend the religious services at the Octagon Chapel, and though she did not at once sever herself from her former associates and pursuits, yet there was a gradual and steady progress; and an entire change in her principles and conduct eventually ensued.

During the next five or six years, Mrs. Opie published two or three tales, one of which, called "Valentine's Eve," is interesting, as showing the state of her religious feelings at the time it was written. The lesson it inculcates is, the superiority of religious principle as a rule of action, and as a support under affliction and unmerited calumny. The heroine of the story, pronouncing it to be her conviction that "moral virtues are only durable and precious as they are derived from religious belief, and are the result of it," says, "Some suppose that morality can stand alone, without the aid of religion, and even fancy that republican firmness will enable us to bear affliction; but I feel, that the only refuge in sorrow and in trial is the Rock of ages, and the promises of the gospel." Happy, indeed, was it for her, that these sentiments were those of her own heart; for the time was approaching when she was to stand in need of all the support which the "exceeding great and precious

promises" of God's word alone can impart. Not many months after, she mentions, in writing to Mr. Hayley, that her father had been indisposed, had accidentally lamed himself, and been "unwell, dispirited, and broken down in mind and body for weeks, nay, months." From this attack Dr. Alderson rallied, but his illness returned, and assumed a more serious aspect in the latter part of the year 1820; and his daughter, anxious that he should have the best medical advice, accompanied him to London, though without any beneficial results; for he was seized while there with extreme depression of spirits, and shortly returned to Norwich, and from this time till his death he hardly ever left his own house.

Those only who were acquainted with the intense and devoted attachment of Mrs. Opie to her father, can fully appreciate the anguish of that feeling which drew from her the words, "I suffered much. Oh! it was the most bitter trial I ever experienced, when I was obliged to tell the poor afflicted people to whom he gave advice daily in our large hall, that their kind physician was no longer able to receive them and to try and heal their diseases. For many years he prescribed for about four or five hundred persons at his house every week. As long as he could, he continued to see them; and when unable to go down stairs, he admitted them into my little drawing-room, till at length he said he could see no one again. He wept, and so did I; and they

were bitter tears, for I feared he would not long survive the loss of his usefulness." For nearly five years the continued and increasing illness of Dr. A. occupied the time and constant thought of his daughter, and there are many interesting evidences that this afflictive visitation was a "blessing in disguise," sent by her heavenly Father to wean her from the world, and call her wholly to himself. Two touching prayers, written at this time, were found preserved among her papers—affecting testimonials of her love and filial piety. In one of them occurs the following petition: " . . . Deign, Lord, to hear the prayers of a child for a beloved parent. Enable me to be the humble means of leading him to thee. Oh, let us 'thirst' and come together 'to the waters, and buy wine and milk without money and without price.' Grant, O Lord, that ere we go hence and are no more seen, our united voices may ascend to thee in praises and in blessings; and may we together call upon the name of Him who has redeemed us by his most precious blood, that in that blood our manifold sins 'may be washed away.'"

About this time happened the death of Miss Priscilla Gurney — an event deeply lamented by Mrs. Opie, who lost in her a true Christian friend and helper. In some lines, written in memory of her, she thus tenderly apostrophizes her:

" Oh, how vast thy loss to me!
I miss thy soothing smile of love;

Thy voice, that could my fears control,
Thy words, that bade my doubts remove,
And breathed conviction o'er my soul."

It is pleasing to observe the interest henceforward taken by Mrs. Opie in the spiritual well-being of others. Naturally benevolent, when the influences of Divine love began to operate in her heart, she sought to communicate to others the light and joy vouchsafed to her own soul. In the Bible and Anti-Slavery Societies she took a deep interest, which became increasingly warm, and induced her, after a time, to engage actively in promoting their interests. After uniting herself to the Society of Friends, she constantly attended the public meetings, and took a share, for many years, in the duties of a Bible collector. Those who were in the habit of attending the religious anniversaries held in St. Andrew's Hall, will remember her striking figure, erect and stately, seated upon the platform, surrounded by the numerous friends who congregated there. What pure benevolence, what fervent eloquence, what devoted charity, characterized the speakers on these occasions! Mr. Gurney attracted to his hospitable mansion a goodly company of philanthropists and Christians of various denominations, who met to promote these great objects; and the meetings, annually renewed, were a source of rich enjoyment, as well as true profit to many.

In the year 1823, Mrs. Opie published the work

on "Lying in all its Branches," of which mention has been made at the commencement of this memoir. The subject is one affording ample scope for the moralist, and it is handled in a manner at once novel and ingenious.* It received the best of all sanctions, that of the Divine blessing. Writing shortly after to Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Opie says: "Joseph and Catherine are highly pleased with my new book on lying, (each sort of lie is illustrated by a simple anecdote or tale,) and they think it must do good. ..... My dear father is better, I think, on the whole. I am at times very low; but there is safety in lowness for some people, and I am one of them. I know a tortoise-pace is a safe pace; but still I am dissatisfied with my slow progress."

Dr. Alderson attained the age of fourscore in

* It has recently come to my knowledge, that this work was made the means of lasting benefit to a young lady, who being convinced, from its perusal, of the wickedness she was guilty of in lying merely through inconsideration and carelessness, was gradually induced to think seriously of her true spiritual condition. By the blessing of God, this serious thought issued in sincere repentance and conversion. There is only one drawback to the great satisfaction I feel in this fact; I mean, that she to whom the knowledge of it would have given such happiness, remained in ignorance of it, and knew not that she had reaped this fruit of her labour.

I cannot forbear to add the testimony of a Christian friend in America, who, speaking of the wide circulation of this book in that country, and its great usefulness there, added, significantly, "Had Mrs. Opie only lived for the purpose of writing that one book, she would have done a life's work of good."

C. L. B.

the spring of this year, and his daughter thus greeted him on the return of his birthday :—

"TO MY FATHER.

"*7th April*, 1823.

"And thou art eighty! 'tis thy natal day.
Then, oh, forgive me, that I dare to pray,
(Since from so dear a tie 'tis hard to part,
A tie, sole treasure of this lonely heart,)
That many a year thou yet may'st with me stay,
Resign'd in pain, and cheerful in decay.
While the bright hopes redeeming love has taught,
Prompting each pious, purifying thought,
Live in thy soul, to tell of sins forgiven,
And plume its pinions for its flight to heaven."

Several years had now passed since Mrs. Opie first attended the religious services of the Friends. Her attachment to some among their number, whose influence had tended so greatly to promote her best interests, and by whose counsels and prayers she had been so much aided, had become more and more deep-rooted; and at length she decided to "cast in her lot" among them. This decision cost her, indeed, much anxiety and long deliberation. It was not without many a pang that she finally renounced the prepossessions and friendships of former days, and resolved to sacrifice so much that had been endeared to her by the ties and habits of early years. It was no small self-denial, not only to yield up the gaieties and friendships of the world, but to adopt the strict and more precise

views and principles of the Society to which she now applied for membership. Of the perplexities and difficulties she experienced at this time, her letters, written to Mrs. Fry, give sufficient proof.

In January, 1824, she thus expressed her feelings: "It is indeed true, that I never feel so comforted as when I am humbled, and experience a deep sense of my own sinfulness; when I rise from my knees, or leave meeting with an arrow striking in my heart, as it were, I feel a sort of pleasure which I now would not exchange for aught the world can give. I hope this will not seem to thee unreal or fantastical; but no, I think thou wilt understand it. . . . . Meantime I feel my reliance on my Saviour growing stronger every day. But no one, save that wise, and merciful, and just Being, who has tried, and is now trying me, knows, or ever will know, what I have to endure from the many unseen peculiarities of my situation. However, I take comfort and encouragement from my difficulties; I know that I am most vile, and that I ought to be for ever striving to show my gratitude to my blessed Redeemer, by devoting myself entirely to his service. I feel a repose and peace, in spite of my conscious sins, which the world cannot give, or take away; and which, I humbly hope, will continue to bear me up unto the end. Above all, I am conscious of a daily increasing spirit of prayer, and a constant desire of communion with the Bestower of it. . . . . What a letter of egotism!

But I know thy mind will be interested in the 'dealings' with mine; and I wish thee, dearest Betsy, always to know whereabouts I am."

To those who have themselves experienced similar trials, hopes, and fears, the sentiments expressed in the above letter will appear far from "unreal and fantastic;" they will see in them evidences of a "good work" begun in the heart, and will rejoice in the belief that the hope of the writer was justified by her subsequent experience. She had been brought to the point at which the great apostle had arrived, when the messenger was sent to tell him what he must do. "Behold, he prayeth," it was said of Paul; and from henceforward, having openly given himself to Christ, he went on his way rejoicing, to run in all the commandments of his God and Saviour.

Several months elapsed after this letter was written, before Mrs. Opie finally united herself to the Society of Friends. The intervening period was one of trial and deep anxiety to her. Long and sadly did she watch the painful and lingering decline of her beloved father, as she tended him with unwearying love and care, and endeavoured to while away the tedious hours by every device her ingenious affection could suggest. She played to him on the piano, and, at his request, sang to him the psalms and hymns of Dr. Watts. He appeared to find great consolation in listening to her, as, in rich, full tones, she sang the versions of the divine

songs of the "sweet psalmist of Israel." Often he asked to have the hymn repeated, and that music soothed him to rest when any other medicine might have been administered in vain. And when, worn by pain, and enfeebled by the infirmities of age, he sank to sleep, and enjoyed a temporary ease, with fond eagerness she sketched him as he lay, and again and again traced the features she loved to gaze upon, conscious that, ere long, she must see them no more. Her sketch-book was filled with numerous pencilled outlines, which she delighted to take of all her friends and acquaintance; and among them were repeated likenesses of Dr. Alderson, usually representing him in sleep.

Some notes addressed by her at this time to a friend residing at a distance, bear touching evidence of her grief, and also show how she was sustained through the season of trial, and from what sources her support was derived. One or two short extracts may be given from these affecting memoranda. "I shall not be quite easy (she writes, under date 23rd, 7th month, 1825,) till my dear father is better. Nor can I help remembering with pain that Hudson Gurney and Joseph John Gurney, I believe, are absent. But I humbly hope, that in my hour of need, if it should come, I shall be permitted to feel that 'my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth,' and that 'though I walk in the midst of trouble, he will revive me.'" And again, writing shortly after to

the same friend, she says—" . . . . I fell into deep depression yesterday evening, and during the night; and this morning I still feel that 'all his waves and billows are gone over me:' never did I pass such a night, or wake to such a morning. Yet all is as it was. No one came near me for hours in the evening, and I felt the bitterness of the anticipated solitude of my life to come—*a tieless being*. I also seem as if the light of his countenance were turned away from me, and all is dark. Doubtless, this is a new trial of faith—and trial it is. My only moments of comfort yesterday evening, were when I sang repeatedly to my precious charge, my own hymn,* 'Great God, let thy constraining power,' repeating the last verse several times; on which verse he said he wished to sleep. Well! the darkest cloud has oft a silver lining, and so may mine. . . . ."

* This hymn was afterwards published in a collection of poetical pieces; as it is short, I give it entire:—

"Great God, let thy constraining power
To thee our wandering feelings draw,
And let us give this sacred hour
To humble fear and holy awe.

"And should the sense of conscious sin
Our trembling hearts with anguish shake,
And hope thy pardoning love to win,
Our fainting, sinking souls forsake,

"Oh, let thy grace such strength supply,
Lord, breathe the thought which comfort gives,
And point to faith's uplifted eye
The Lamb who *died*, the God who lives!"

In this note there is a passing allusion to Mr. Joseph John Gurney. During the lengthened period of Dr. Alderson's gradual decline, he had been much comforted and assisted by the attentions and religious counsels of this excellent and devoted man; and there is reason to believe that the well-known work of Mr. Gurney, on the "Evidences of Christianity," had been of use to him. When Mrs. Opie joined the Society of Friends, Dr. Alderson expressed his warm approval of the step his daughter had taken. He had, during the time of his illness, greatly changed in his feelings on the all-important subject of religion. He read the books which his child brought under his notice; above all, he read the Holy Scriptures, and sought the wisdom which should enable him to see the "wonderful things" that are hidden from the mind of the natural man, and can only be revealed to the soul by the Spirit of God.

There exists an affecting record of the last two years of his life, in a ledger-like book, into which he entered all his medical cases, day by day. The first entry is dated January 25, 1824; and the last, September 7, 1825, little more than a month before his death. In this book he has, every now and then, in the midst of his professional notes, made an entry of some personal feeling or event. Thus, under date January 27, 1824, he writes: "Southey came—his portrait taken—his hair grey." March 4, 1825, "Miserere mei, Domine, precor;" and

again, August 16: "Never felt so like dying as I have just now done; the sensation was indescribably bad." At length, on the closing page of the book, he writes:—"I never thought I should live to finish this book. If I live till to-morrow, I shall begin a new one. My pain, at this moment, is bad; my intellects clear, and I look forward to my being saved for happiness hereafter. How much I long for my last end! but in this I act wrongly; for a man ought to wait patiently till his end comes; for I can live no longer than God pleases, let a man talk to me ever so long about curing my legs." On the cover of this book Dr. A. has written the following verse of Dr. Watts:—

> "Let all the heathen writers join
> To form one perfect book;
> Great God, when once compared with thine,
> How mean their writings look!"

Shortly before his death he was visited by Mr. Gurney, and, in reply to an observation made by him, expressed, with great feeling, his humble confidence in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So died the father of Amelia Opie. As she gazed upon his lifeless countenance, she was able to entertain a hope that supported her soul, and preserved her from sinking under the blow. How deeply and enduringly she lamented him, and how tenderly she cherished his memory, was evident in every day of her after life. He had expressed a

wish to be permitted to find his last resting-place in the Friends' burial-ground, and in compliance with his desire, he was interred there, in the grave which is now shared by her who loved him so dearly.

PART II.

MRS. OPIE'S HOUSE, CASTLE MEADOW, NORWICH.

CHAPTER I.

We have now arrived at a period in this short biography, from which I wish to invite the reader to look back on the past history of her, whose path through life we are tracing. I said, at the commencement of these pages, that I believed we should find in that history much to illustrate the

goodness of God, and to show the infinite superiority of religious principle to the highest attainments of nature, as well as the greater happiness of which it is productive. If we endeavour now to recall the incidents that have been touched upon as we passed along, I think we cannot fail to observe many striking proofs of the providence of God and his overruling care on behalf of his servant. Adverse as the circumstances of her early history assuredly were to the formation of anything like Christian character—leaving her exposed to various dangerous and seductive influences, and assailed by numerous snares and temptations—she was, nevertheless, preserved from running into the extravagances of many others, who shared, with her, the enthusiasm and exaggerated opinions of an age of excitement and revolution. Had her affections unhappily become interested on behalf of any of those "friends of change," it is but too probable that her course would have been a very different one. But, guarded by the influence of early attachments, she clung to the home and the friendships of her girlhood; and when, at a later period, she became the wife of Mr. Opie—although, unhappily, this union was not one that brought her within the influence of the high and happy sanctions of true religion, yet there was much about her husband calculated to check her natural inclination to gay pleasures and company, and suited to excite in her mind a spirit of diligence in the cultivation of her

natural powers. The impression produced on her character by the few short years of her married life, seems to have been, on the whole, a healthful and useful one. She was roused to energy, and quickened by the example of her husband's earnestness and self-denial, to industry and self-culture.

From the natural character of Mrs. Opie it might have been expected, as was actually the case, that she would be greatly influenced both in her general conduct, and the formation of her opinions, by those who had power over her affections. Accordingly, it was by this means—the Spirit of God operating through the medium of her affections and friendships—that her mind was gradually turned to the consideration of religious subjects.

There is something very significant, as it appears to me, in the coincidences of events at this period of her history. Brought, on her return to her father's house, after she became a widow, into constant intercourse with those friends whose influence so powerfully affected her future history, she was arrested, at a season of gaiety and worldly excitement, by the death of one of their circle, and recalled from town, to share in the affecting solemnities consequent on that event. Her friendship was thus more closely cemented with those who used all their influence to direct her mind to the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." Good and amiable, of cultivated minds, and actuated by holy principle, they hailed with joy the first dawning

symptoms of awakened spiritual interest in her mind. How touchingly has Mrs. Opie spoken of the fostering care and Christian love of her sweet friend, Priscilla Gurney! And when that lovely being was summoned "to her kindred skies," she left behind her the remembrance of her example, and the effect of her counsels and prayers.

Those who knew the late lamented Mr. Joseph John Gurney will feel, that his friendship, his influence, and his ministry, were peculiarly adapted to meet the wants and feelings of his sister's friend. He has himself said, in his diary, given in his life, that her friendship with his sister Priscilla and himself appeared to be the principal means of producing the gradual change in her sentiments on religious subjects.

But, above all, the inmost depths of her nature were stirred by the illness and death of Dr. Alderson. Filial love was, through life, her strongest passion; and all the affection of which she was capable was centred on her father. It is evident that, so soon as she was alarmed by the symptoms of approaching decay and death in this beloved being, the fountains of her soul were broken up. She felt anxious concern; and her care, not only for his present but future happiness, was quickened into anguish:—"I suffered (she said) much and deeply." From various hints in letters to her friends, as well as from occasional references elsewhere, it seems evident that she was dissatis-

fied with his mental and spiritual condition. He had not been orthodox in his opinions,—he had not "lived to God in the world." The eyes of her soul were opened to a perception of the absolute necessity of a change of heart. She felt that for him, as well as for herself, the vital transition "from death unto life" was needed; and humbly, earnestly, and prayerfully she sought, by every means in her power, to direct the mind of her aged and sinking parent to the only and all-sufficient source of hope and salvation, the Redeemer of sinners.

It was a delicate and difficult task, to teach while seeming rather to inquire; to lead him to whom she had been wont to look for guidance. But she persevered in her work of faith and love, and at length she rejoiced in hope that her desire was fulfilled, and she was able to yield up the father whom she loved, in submission to the Divine will; for she felt that there was hope in his death.

It is to this period in the history of Mrs. Opie's life that we have now arrived; and I purpose, in accordance with my original design, to give a more detailed account of her future career, endeavouring, as much as possible, to let her speak for herself in her letters and journals, from which the reader will gain the best and truest picture of her life, and be able with most satisfaction to judge as to the true excellence of her moral and religious character. I can, with the greater pleasure, dwell on this latter

time, as it was then I personally knew her, and enjoyed the happiness (especially in the last years of her life) of a frequent and intimate intercourse with her. Alas! I now speak of this as a pleasure that *I had;* and its loss has taught me more highly to appreciate its value.

During the first months which followed her father's death, Mrs. Opie, though suffering deeply, was sustained by her faith in the promises of Him whose voice she had heard and obeyed, and for whose service she had renounced the approval and the pleasures of the world. In the kindness and sympathy of her friends she found comfort, and thankfully acknowledged that there is "good in friendship, and delight in holy love;" and, in her turn, she sought to "bind up the heart that was broken," and to minister to the consolation of others—one of the surest and best means of obtaining relief under the pressure of sorrow. It is impossible to read her journals and letters of this time, without recognizing in them a depth of piety and Christian experience that could only spring from a divine source. Her tender compassion for the afflicted, and her labours of love, in visiting the sick, the prisoner, and the necessitous, remind one of Horace Walpole's words to Hannah More: "Your heart is always aching for others, and your head for yourself." Writing to the friend, in correspondence with whom she experienced the

relief of disburdening her sorrows, she told of the paroxysms of grief that sometimes threatened to overwhelm her, and of the help afforded in her time of need.

These letters are deeply affecting, and a few passages from them will not, perhaps, be unacceptable to the reader. . . . "He who is a 'Father of the fatherless' (she says, a few weeks after her bereavement), permits the storm that beats upon me to pass away soon; and I am really better, on the whole, than I could expect to be. I am thankful to say that my nights are good, and so favoured! I am then permitted to feel, more sensibly than at other times, a conviction of the happiness of him whom I have lost; and that He who has removed my father from me, listens, and will continue to listen, to the cry of my penitence and my prayer."

Yet sore was the conflict of her troubled heart; and shortly after, speaking of her distress and anguish, she says: "I must not proceed on this subject, or thou wilt think me rebellious to the just and merciful dispensations of the Most High; which is by no means the case. I trust that I am resigned and thankful; but thou wilt own, that if one does not deeply feel a trial, it is no trial. . . . The sense of my loss increases upon me indeed, yet I am more cheerful to-day; and, in time, I hope to be more even in spirits, and more what I used to be — in cheerfulness, I mean; for never, never may I, in other respects, resemble my former self,

that thoughtless trifler along the path of life here so long forgetful of the only path that is worthy to be trodden, and which leads to life hereafter—the road to Zion, that city of the saints' solemnities. But I must watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation, and ever distrust myself and my own deceitful heart."

The following letter, written to another friend shortly after, shows a gradual improvement in her spirits, and evinces much Christian submission, as well as watchful alacrity to do good, as opportunity presented itself.

"*Norwich, 3rd mo., 26th*, 1826.

"My beloved Friend, ... I had thought that I could never feel anything again, but thy news really affected me. I am, I own, uneasy at thy present state of suffering. What a mercy it is that thou wast enabled, through faith, to bear thy apparent sentence, so abruptly pronounced! In nothing are the Lord's dealings with us so wonderful and gracious as when he enables us to bear trials, which we should once have expected to shrink from and to sink under. How have I been permitted to experience this! My health is quite restored, my recent journey having, I think, been beneficial. On my way home, I was alone, from Scole to Norwich, with a young man, apparently dying of decline; and I felt it a duty to talk on religious subjects, and found him, I trust, teach-

able; and I promised to send him J. J. Gurney's letter, and others. He was so delighted!—but, poor thing! he was full of hopes of recovery.

"I have been tolerably tranquil for some days; and to-day I visited my dear father's grave: he hoped I would sometimes do so. I felt peace, both for him and myself, while I gazed on it, and looked forward with cheerfulness to sleeping beside him. H. Girdlestone comforted me much, the other day, by reminding me how often, in mercy, the child was summoned away soon after the parent. The idea brought closer the prospects of eternity, and the necessity, therefore, of preparation as more urgent, that the day's work may be done in the day.

"May my attention be fixed on present duty, that my remaining time may be usefully and well spent, and that I may be ready when the summons shall come to call me hence! Oh, my dear friend, let us offer up our prayers to Him who heareth prayer, that we may both humbly endeavour to improve the present, and, relying on him who careth for us, be contented to let the future remain, comparatively, uncared for. I believe, that even for me, one of his most unworthy servants, he will 'make a way through the wilderness,' if he intends my tarrying here; and if it is his gracious will to summon me away, I trust that he will be with me in the valley of the shadow of death, and that through the merits of the Redeemer, and his merits alone, I shall find acceptance." . . . .

A few months later (the 26th July), she writes . . . . . "What a privilege is that of prayer! what power is vouchsafed to us, when enabled to hold communion with the God who heareth prayer! There is no satisfaction equal to lying at the foot of his throne, and pouring out the inmost soul before him, even though it be in self-abasement and conscious sinfulness. My beloved friend, continue 'instant in prayer,' and then, I trust, thou wilt find, even here, thy reward, and all thy wants will be supplied." . . . .

In the autumn of this year (1826) Mrs. Opie went on a visit to some friends residing near the Lakes. The change of scene, and friendly intercourse, were beneficial to her, and she returned refreshed to her now solitary home. During her stay at Grasmere, she wrote to some dear friends, residing near London, a letter of details respecting her journey, so full of natural feeling, and so characteristic of the writer, that I give it at some length; the rather because it is not published in the Memorials.

"*Grasmere Cottage, 9th mo.*, 15*th*, 1826.

. . . . "I think this spot the most beautiful I ever beheld; it surpasses all my conceptions and expectations, and baffles all my powers of description. I want to see a little more of the lake as I sit. But I would not touch a bristle of the beard

of the venerable oak that stretches its arms across the lawn, as if in kind protection of its beauties. I saw the moon double itself in the lake last night; and to-day the water is almost equally lovely in sunshine. What a drive I had from Kendal hither! yet I seemed in a dream; and I wanted then, as I do now, to write all I saw and felt to the beloved being who used to double my enjoyments by more than sharing them. This is, I think, a sort of insanity, but one that time only can remove; and it has, I hope, its use, by keeping me low and bowed down before Him whose chastisements are in reality mercies.

"My journey in all respects has been comfortable, nor did I feel fatigued till yesterday at noon. Then my strength and spirits suddenly gave way; for I had undergone much excitement on the road. I had met with interesting persons and things, and I really think I could make something amusing out of my three days' journey.

. . . . "I was alone some time in the evening of the first day, when the guard put in a poor girl, who was too thinly clad to continue outside; and in spite of her sleepiness and her reluctance, I chose to make her answer my questions, and I learned much to shock me every way. The poor pretty thing (for very pretty she was) had been up to London from Wellington, to work in the gardens at Fulham; and I find that scores of girls, and young men also, I dare say, go up from the

country for this purpose, and that they work all the sabbath day also, and no care whatever seems taken of them, religiously or morally. I do hope that, lost and ignorant as I know this poor thing to be, there may yet be found means to save her; at least, it is worth the trial. But, to think of the yearly victims to this frightful system of summer work and sabbath-breaking! We ought to send missionaries to Fulham, I think.

"My second day's journey found me in company with a London tradesman's handsome wife, going to Trentham, and a young man well dressed, who was going to Stafford. My tracts 'burnt in my pocket,' as the saying is; but how to pave the way to a delivery of them, I knew not. At last, after a long silence, I took out my tiny Bible, and said I did not like, in company, to read to myself; therefore, with their leave, I would read a chapter aloud. They consented, in a way, and I read 'The woman of Samaria.' They seemed pleased, and both commented well on it. My way was now opened, and I gave each of them J. J. Gurney's Letters, and the young man William Allen's tract, and that against theatrical amusements; and the lady the extracts from Judge Hale. They seemed grateful, and we parted with mutual good wishes. Now, my dear friend, I must say that I feel it very difficult to give to persons in general, tracts, without stories, to get the wholesome but severe truths down. No one, when administering

a salutary pill or medicine, scruples to clothe it in currant jelly, and I really believe that your Tract Society would do more good by letting the caterers for it provide suitable moral stories and anecdotes. Among the ever-varying passengers of a stage coach, was a lady who at last said she thought she had seen me before; and we found that twenty years ago we had met at a Lady Rush's, and she said that she thought she had heard Lady Hamilton and Mrs. Opie sing a duet together. I was glad to be able to contradict this. I never sang with that talented but disreputable woman. The other passenger, then, was a little boy, who told me he was sent for from school to Manchester, where he lived, because his mamma was very ill, and wished to see him. Twelve miles from Manchester, the boy spoke to some one at the coach door, and said, 'How is mamma?' 'Oh, never you mind,' was the reply; 'do you go on to Manchester.' On hearing this, I looked out, and saw a man dressed in black, with red eyes, and evidently much affected; and I concluded the poor child was motherless. So did he. At first his tears fell in silence; and I asked him who was that person that spoke to him? He said it was his papa, and no doubt his poor mamma was dead; but we reassured him, thinking, if so, the husband could not be where we saw him. His young grief affected me much. . . . . .

"Thy attached friend,

"A. Opie."

Mrs. Opie appears from this time to have kept a diary, in which she noted passing events, and recorded her states of mind and feeling. These private memoranda, intended evidently as aids to self-government, and as means of exciting herself to diligence and zeal, evinced the constant care she exercised over her daily walk and conversation. The first of them is headed—

"1827. *My Journal, New Year's Day.*

"Too unwell to venture to the Sick Poor Committee to-day. Sorry to begin the year with the omission of a duty. . . . . The day was calm, on the whole; but I was not satisfied with myself; nay, far otherwise. Read the 46th Psalm to the servants. Felt the force of the words, 'Be still, and know that I am God;' and also the comfort of 'God is our refuge, a very present help in trouble.'"

"(21st of 1st mo.) Rose better in health, after a peaceful night, and felt calm and thankful. Walked to Bracondale; made calls there, and attended the Infant School Committee. In the evening was at a party; the conversation not general, but rather pleasant. I believe things and public persons, not private individuals, were talked of; this is always desirable, but rare. . . . Had only time to read a psalm to the servants, which I regret. On looking over the day, I had, in one

respect, much self-blame to undergo. Night peaceful and favoured, but my morning thoughts full of painful recollections of little slights and trials. Oh, my pride of heart!—not subdued yet. 'Oh for a broken, contrite heart!'"

In these entries there are allusions to two or three particulars which deserve attention. The habit of daily reading the Scriptures to her servants was one which Mrs. Opie constantly maintained. She preserved it sacredly even to the end; and very shortly before her decease, calling for the Bible, she sat up in her bed, and read aloud to her maids.

She speaks here also of the Sick Poor Society, and of the Bracondale Infant School. Both these excellent institutions were great favourites with her. Of the former she was a devoted friend and supporter through the rest of her life. As long as she was able she visited for this charity, frequenting the yards and lanes where the sick and destitute resided, and ministering to their wants, temporal and spiritual; and when she could no longer visit in person, she had her pensioners, whom she relieved by her bounty, and cheered by kindly messages and gifts. Truly her heart overflowed with compassion for the afflicted of her kind; she "wept with those that wept," and was to all mankind a friend and well-wisher.

There is a passing touch here, in allusion to the kind of conversation usually kept up in social in-

tercourse, which is very characteristic of her. She disliked, on principle, the personal talk, so prone to degenerate into gossip and scandal, which is too frequently indulged in; and discountenanced it not only by her own example, but by unmistakable marks of her disapproval. She aimed at making conversation on these occasions, as much as possible, general; and scouted the selfishness which leads to the *tête-à-tête* chats of individuals, to the exclusion of general converse and the discussion of points of interest and instruction to all.

The journal continues—"(4th day). Had a sweet, sleepful night; but have passed a self-indulgent day. Read F. Hemans' poetry; it is unique and exquisite, breathing always of salvation and heaven. I felt comfort while reading A. L. Barbauld's beautiful hymn, 'Behold, where breathing love divine!' I hoped I was not slow to kind offices; but other convictions kept me full of counteracting humility . . . . I am so dissatisfied with myself that I dare hardly ask, or expect, a blessing on my labours for others. How cold and dead in the spirit I feel to-night! but I know 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,' and how I need one!

"(7th, 1st day.) A quiet night, and very satisfactory morning meeting . . . Wrote a serious letter, with Scripture quotations, to L. E., with two copies of J. J. Gurney's Letter; may the gift be blessed to him! Read about eighty pages of a book lent me by Dr. Ash, called, 'The Grounds of

a Holy Life.' Read Paul's fine address to Agrippa to the servants, and remarks on the Epistle to Titus, by H. Tarford. I hope they understood it: it explains the nature of grace, and clearly. Cough very troublesome to-day,—and now to bed, thankful for the mercies and favours of the day. The poor Duke of York! would I knew what his death-bed hopes and feelings were, and on what grounded!

"(14th.) A night of cough, but of comfort, and rose in spirits; had a painfully windy walk to meeting. An agreeable surprise there. J. J. G. returned this morning unexpectedly from London: he was much favoured in his ministry to-day, morning and evening. Afterwards I called on poor old B. and read the 43rd Isaiah to him; and on poor P. U., and found her very low indeed—and no wonder; these are early times with her yet, poor bereaved being! The sight of such upsetting and destroying grief is very affecting, and I have only too much sympathy with her. We have both lost our earthly all. I was prevented, by the weather, from calling on the M.'s, and this was fortunate, as the wind had brought down their chimneys in a most destructive manner, though providentially no lives were lost, as they had taken alarm, and removed the children: truly 'His tender mercies are over all his works.' A quiet evening; read to the servants, and hope they understood."

The next few entries record a short visit to

Earlham, which "I left (she says) grateful for many happy hours spent there. On my return, was alone all the afternoon and evening; read in the Italian Bible, and to the servants, and am going to bed comforted and thankful; but I had, during the morning, one of my paroxysms of regret for ill-fulfilled duties, and was 'brought very low;' but He 'helped me,' and all is peace again, and I shall lie down in quiet. (25th.) To meeting; afterwards went a round of visits to invalid friends, and a poor woman. In the afternoon went out again, and visited another afflicted invalid; and felt my mind tenderly impressed with pity, and with thankfulness for my own health . . . (30th.) Rose well and happy, and settled my weekly accounts; in the evening wrote letters. I have been comforted all day, through the tender, sorrowful remembrance of him who is gone; and the memory of his deep and ever-enduring and unselfish love is frequently recurring and clinging to me; and death alone, I believe, can ever banish him from my daily and fond, grateful recollection; but 'it is well.' I can say so from the bottom of my heart, and though I remain, I murmur not. Now to bed, with thankfulness, though with tears.

"(2nd February, 2nd mo.) An idle, and so far, I fear, a sinful day; gave 1*l.* to a case that *touched* me; it was, I fear, too much, but could not help it. . . Dear O. Woodhouse here; glad to feel that a son of my beloved cousin, and bearing his name,

is under my roof. Our evening has been placid; spent part in talk, and part in reading. Now to bed, feeling rather depressed that I have done nothing to-day to improve myself, except reading in the Bible. I begin to feel that my time must be made profitable, or I cannot be happy; my solitary evenings are my shortest time, and happiest, because employed. Oh that I had earlier thought thus! Then would 'my peace have flowed as a river, and my righteousness as the waves of the sea,' perhaps—but I am, and was vile.

"(5th.) Rose cheerful, and went to visit various friends. To my dear father's grave and the other graves of those dear to me. How I wished he might see me and read my heart!"

A few days after the last entry, Mrs. Opie's diary records a visit to her much-beloved friends, Miss Buxton and Miss Gurney, at Northrepps Cottage. Each day, during her stay there, has its memorabilia noted. It is evident from the tone of these short reminiscences, that her spirits were revived and braced by this change of scene and friendly companionship. Returning home on the 23rd of the month, she says on the preceding evening, "I leave N. C. with a heart full of grateful love to its dear possessors. Alas! to-bed for the last time here, this year, and perhaps for ever. Peace be to this house!" . . .

During this visit the following letter was written to the friend with whom she was at this time in

*

such frequent correspondence. There is so much in it that shows the spiritual mindedness and growth in grace of the writer, that it seemed desirable not to curtail it. It is dated,

"18*th* 2*nd mo.*, 1827.

"My dear Friend,— . . . . I wish to tell thee, that I have felt so satisfied in mind, and so benefited during the last ten years, that I have daily read and studied the Scriptures; still more during the last two years, when I have read them every morning and every night, and often in the day, besides making a perusal of them my earliest and latest duty—that I earnestly wish all whom I love, and in whose welfare here and hereafter I am warmly interested, to do the same.

"Whatever tends to deepen our faith, and increase our knowledge of our God and Saviour, increases our happiness, and gives us weapons against the deceitfulness of our own hearts, and bestows strength wherewith to meet and overcome the assaults of our souls' enemies. I would say to every young man and woman, 'Study the Scriptures daily, and be watchful unto prayer;' and having said this, I should feel that I had given advice, which, however common-place, would, if acted upon, insure peace here and happiness hereafter . . . . .

"(19th.) I had no sleep at first, last night; and the painful past, the London part, I mean, lived

before me, and I wished I had not told thee of the masquerade there, 'a charity ball' it was called. So worldlings cheat the soul's adversary! I do repent of former follies in dust and ashes. Be thankful that thou wast born out of the world, and never even *wish* to enter it. I solemnly declare that I would not, for its highest enjoyments, exchange one of my most tearful hours, or my moments of most painful regret and self-abasement!" . . . .

The diary continues as before, after her return from Northrepps. The entries are daily, and mention the events of the passing hour, and the various engagements of the writer—her visits to the sick poor; to the workhouse;* to the jail; to the Magdalen, and to the school. Occasionally remarks of point and interest occur, and of these some are selected for insertion here.

"(26th.) Wrote letters. A time of storm and calm; one of my paroxysms of grief for the dead, and self-blame for neglected duties, succeeded by calm and peacefulness. Paid three visits of charity, and went to the workhouse. Carried coquilles and oranges. Saw the child, and thought her perhaps obstinate, but still an object of pity and interest. Saw the girl, P. C. Death was in her face. Seemingly she was contrite; but even then,

* The reader is referred to ch. viii. for an account of Mrs. O.'s prison visits.

I find, she told me a lie. Oh, that workhouse! 'There 's something rotten in the state of Denmark!' Spent a happy evening: good intentions if not good deeds. (5th of the 3rd mo.)—Had a good night and peace of mind when awake. Visited poor B. and admired his thankfulness for living where he can see the blue sky, the birds, and a rainbow as he lies in bed. Went to the S. Poor Committee monthly meeting; but too low to enjoy it. One of my sad, sad fits of regret for omitted filial duties, and for things done and undone, said and unsaid; but feel this ever-recurring trial to be inflicted in mercy, and to keep me lowly and humble before my Creator. Fear, however, that the feeling increases, and that it may be a temptation. Find what H. Girdlestone said to me once, the most comforting reply to my fears:—'You seem to have expected that a sinful being should have performed a duty perfectly; but it was not in human nature to do it.' Well! I have only to hope that my tears and agonies will keep me humble, as they spring from a sense of my own vileness. . . . To the school. Attentive and orderly class. Gave a cake to each child; afterwards had the sale of the work. Dined at my uncle's at six. . . . . My friends looking well and in spirits. Thankful to see them so. All good be with them! Finished reading the 'Hedge of Thorns' to the servants. I lost a great deal of time to-day reading an old favourite; felt after-

wards displeased, and shocked even, at my waste of time, and my life so far spent. 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' To bed, thankful for the enjoyment of so many and unmerited mercies. What a generous Master we serve!

"(6th of the 5th mo.) Sad indolence and neglect; not a line written in my journal since the 21st of last month. Oh for a power to be more diligent in future; but how soon, through life, have I been weary in well-doing! To-day at meeting I felt deeply and solemnly engaged in secret prayer. Two of my friends to dinner. How little either of them, poor things, seemed to think of their great change, though one is seventy-six, the other seventy-three! Dress, cards, the world. But let me look to my own blindness and worldliness, and not censure theirs; and to me the voice has spoken 'Come,' and how have I obeyed it? Alas! —Visited a sick friend, and a poor lost girl, just released from jail. Read Rutherford's Letters all the afternoon. Wrote for votes for a charity-boy. Read to the servants, and to bed, not so dissatisfied as usual with my day's work. May I be humbled, and enabled to rise early to my work to-morrow, and may the labours of my pen be blessed!"

The last entry in this journal is dated the 3rd of the 7th mo.—"Rose early. To Infant School. Little boys idle and ignorant in my class; one, however, good and diligent. Went to the jail; have hopes of one woman; the other is sorry for

detection, not for sin; but these are early times yet. Her temper seems bad; that is, if *expression* is to be trusted. Two calls on my way home. Tired, but not displeased with my day."

* * * * *

I will close this chapter with an extract from a letter written in the autumn of this year, to her friends at Northrepps Cottage. . . . "How every day teems with eventful changes! F. and C., dear ones, have to inhabit a new abode; but death, death is the change of changes. How trumpery, how unimportant, seem all changes compared to that; and how that changes even the very look of existence to many of us! Sometimes it is almost unbearable to me; and I could run into the next room to look for what I cannot find and cannot see again—and which, yet, seems blooming beside me, and cheerful and living, and likely to live; and then I think how little I prized him while I had him with me. Oh! you know something of these feelings, and can deeply sympathize with me in what a child alone can feel. How deeply have I entered into the sorrows of my estimable friend T. R. (an only child), on the loss of his mother, who lived with him. I expressed my feelings as follows:—

> At length, then, the tenderest of mothers is gone!
> Her smiles, her love-accents, can glad thee no more;
> That once cheerful chamber is silent and lone,
> And for thee all a child's precious duties are o'er.

Her welcome at morning, her blessing at night,
No longer the crown of thy comforts can be;
And the friend, seen and loved, since thine eyes first saw light,
Thou canst ne'er see again! thou art orphan'd like me.

Oh, change! from which nature must shrink overpower'd,
Till faith shall the anguish remove and condemn;
For the change to those blest ones who 'die in the Lord,'
Though to us it brings sorrow, gives glory to them."

"9th *mo.*, 1827."

CHAPTER II.

From the time Mrs. Opie joined the Friends, she regularly attended the yearly meetings of the Society, held in London during the month of May. At these seasons she met numerous friends and acquaintances, and had an opportunity of attending the meetings of various societies in whose objects she sympathized, and of which the Bible, and the British and Foreign School, and Anti-Slavery Societies, were among the most valued. What cordial interest she always evinced on these occasions, and with how much animation and lively description she loved to detail afterwards what she had heard and seen! Her eye kindled as she recalled the eloquent address of some friend of the wronged and helpless, and her delighted approval was a meed which a good man might well rejoice to have earned.

Shortly after the entry in her journal with which the preceding chapter concluded, she went to London for the purpose of attending the yearly meeting. Many painful regrets and memories of the past were unavoidable; but she bore up against them, and the effect was beneficial. Solitude, pro-

longed solitude, preyed upon her spirits, and her essentially social nature languished and pined under it. One letter, written at this time, contains some interesting particulars of her proceedings during this visit.

"*Bradpole, Bridport, Dorsetshire,*
"*6th mo.*, 29*th*, 1827.

"My very dear Friend,— . . . . Pray excuse my long silence. I know nothing of N—— since I left it. I have had a feeling which has made me indifferent, not only to writing letters, but to receiving them. It was so different once, and my life, during the last three weeks in London, has realized my loss to me more than ever. . . . . My time during and after the meeting has been very happily spent. Yearly meeting was peculiarly sweet to me this year, and satisfactory to friends. I attended the African meeting at the Freemasons' Tavern; it was this year quite thin. Spring Rice, Charles Barclay, and the Duke of Gloucester, were among the speakers.

"On the 6th day morning, I went to Lord Roden's, to hear him read and expound the Scriptures. At two o'clock every Friday he had this meeting during his stay in London. The company was numerous, and several persons of quality among them. He is, indeed, a highly-gifted man; but, my dear, I have since been at a meeting which will interest thee more. Since I came to London, I

have heard of many whom I left in the world being come out of it; among the rest, Thos. Erskine and his wife. At a bazaar for the schools in St. Giles', held at the Hanover Square Rooms, (at which many of the sellers were Irish nobility,) I saw some friends, who prevailed on me to go and dine with them; and there I met Caroline Fry, with whom I talked of thee. At dinner, they spoke of Mrs. Stephens, who, they said, was to expound this evening at a friend's house near, and I consented to go with them to hear her. It was a large assembly, and I found there many of my bazaar friends. I was warmly welcomed, especially by the fair expounder. Sir J. Mackintosh's daughter (the widow of M. Rich) introduced me to Lady G. W——. Though tired with the bazaar, etc., and as sleepy as possible, that extraordinary and gifted being kept my attention fixed an hour and a half. How eloquent and touching were her words! When it was over, I went up to her; and as I could not express my feelings, I gave her a kiss, and she afterwards embraced me, and we promised to meet if ever we came near each other's habitation. I then stole away. It is certainly an extraordinary power, and many of the clergy, who disapprove of woman's ministry, have been brought round to approve; but I do not call hers ministry, except in prayer. She has done this twenty-two years, and still she does not seem old. How I wish thou hadst been there!

"I came here quite knocked up; but this green, flowery, sequestered nest, among hills, and the sweet society of dear friends, will, I trust, soon restore me. Pray write to thy attached friend,

"A. Opie."

In the following year (1828) "Detraction Displayed" was published. Among the many acknowledgments Mrs. Opie received from her friends on this occasion, was a letter from Archdeacon Wrangham, to whom she had alluded in her work. He expresses the pleasure he had derived from its perusal, and says: "It is the conscientious work of a very gifted writer, and cannot be read without producing, by God's accompanying blessing, excellent effects. The subtilty of the spirit which you have endeavoured to lay is such, that even the worthy, in many cases, inhale and exhale it almost unawares—persons who require only putting upon their guard to avoid it scrupulously for the future. I don't believe the Greek alphabet, (if such be the probable result of your volume,) and its Alphas and Betas, etc., ever accomplished a more valuable service since the days of Cadmus, its reputed inventor. So far do morals outgo mere literature." . . . .

These observations, emanating from such a mind, deserve to be pondered. The "subtilty of the spirit" here spoken of is one against which almost every one needs to be guarded; for there are few

indeed who have escaped its influence. Assuredly there could hardly have been found a censor so free from the fault she exposed and against which she warned others, as Mrs. Opie. She hated backbiting, and set her face resolutely against the indulgence of it in her presence. She was of the opinion of Mr. S. W. Landor, who has remarked, (in his "Pentameron and Pentalogia,") that "propensity to censure not only excites suspicion of malevolence, but reminds the hearer of what he cannot disentangle from his earliest ideas of vulgarity."

In the course of the spring and summer, Mrs. Opie was again in town, and afterwards on a visit to her friends at Upton, from whence she wrote, giving a lively narration of her proceedings, and telling how she had enjoyed the great "delight of hearing and seeing some of the very first men in the country assembled to celebrate the repeal of the sacramental test." Returning to her solitary home after these occasional periods of change and intercourse with her numerous friends, Mrs. Opie resumed, with diligence and interest, her customary habits. As has already been remarked, there was something in her nature and turn of thought that was productive of great variety and diversity of feeling and interest. It was also a matter of principle with her to turn to the best account the resources of the passing season. But, pre-eminently, she was actuated by a true and innate sympathy,

which, when brought under the influence of Christian principle, ripened into the charity of the gospel; and it was *this* which gave a life to all her actions, and made her so unwearied in works of benevolence.

In a letter written about this time, she gives an account of a serious accident that befell her while engaged in one of her visits of mercy: it was written to her friends at Tottenham, and concludes thus:—

. . . . "Now, I will finish by telling thee of the fresh mercy I have received from my gracious Creator. I have had, my surgeon says, 'a miraculous escape,' and I say, a merciful deliverance. Danger the first, strangulation; danger the second, concussion of the brain. I was visiting a poor bedridden woman, and fell *backwards* down many very steep stairs; but my fall was checked by my sticking fast in the turn of the stairs, wedged in, and my head fast as in a vice; my clothes tight, and tightening round me, and suffocation very near. It was, indeed, a struggle for life; and I was graciously permitted not to struggle in vain: my bonnet-string gave way, my head was freed, and I was glad, though I came down four more steep stairs, and a brick floor was my pillow at the end of them. There I lay—the woman of the house too much alarmed to help me, and the child screaming, 'The lady is killed!' But a man came in and took

me up; and I found, with deep thankfulness, that I could stand. I sent for a sedan, and was brought home to my frightened maids, looking like a corpse, but calm, and, as I thought, only bruised. Happily a surgeon from the country got to my door just as I arrived, and helped me upstairs. He was alarmed, and alarmed me into sending for advice, by telling me I was in danger of concussion of the brain. My head was indeed swelled and bleeding; and well it might, for a lock of my hair was torn up by the roots, and found in my cap, showing the violence I came down with: a side-comb, no doubt, did it. Well! my friend Martineau came, was alarmed also, and came again to watch the progress of symptoms, but none came on; and here I am, on the eighth day, unbled, unblistered, (though not unphysicked,) and without having had even a quickened pulse or hot hands. But I am sadly bruised, and the pectoral muscles have suffered. However, as I am in perfect health, the pain and difficulty of moving are nothing. Oh! it is sweet to have to acknowledge the tender mercies of the Lord, and to enter his courts with thanksgiving, though subdued and bent low before him, with a deep sense of one's own unworthiness. But he remembers that we are dust, and loves to perfect his strength in our weakness. Farewell.

"I am ever thy affectionate,

"A. Opie."

That the Divine strength in weakness, for which she sought, was necessary to uphold her spirit during the many conflicts of this period of her life, is evident, from the tone of her letters to those, whose sympathy on such subjects she sought. In the month of August of this year, she wrote with a full heart: . . . . "I am in such deep waters, that I almost feared to take up my pen; and yet I would not exchange this sitting at the foot of the cross for all the gay pleasures I once experienced. Did my room look on a running river, I should have nothing to wish for as to situation; but every day convinces me, that if one's mind and soul are but right, one may do without rocks and vales, mountains and rivers; and if not, all such things are thrown away on their possessor."

In the course of this autumn, Mrs. Opie repaired to Cromer. This place seems to have been, throughout life, very dear to her; owing, doubtless, in part, to the fact, that she had frequently spent the summer season there with her mother, in the days of her childhood; hence it became associated in her mind with these early recollections. There still exists an old MS. book, containing many of her earlier poems. Among them is a sonnet written to the memory of her mother, in the year 1791.

Some of these "Verses written at Cromer," as they are inscribed, were afterwards published. They are full of descriptions of the scenery that charmed her youthful fancy, and paint the pleasures

she experienced while passing the long summer days roaming along the shore, indulging in fond hopes and memories, and weaving her thoughts into verse, grave or gay. She thus apostrophizes her favourite spot:—

"Hail! scene beloved, upon whose tranquil shores,
Thoughtless of ill, I breathed my earliest song,
While childish sports and hopes—a joyous throng—
In soft enchantment bound the guiltless hours."

And again:—

"Here I would wander, from day's earliest dawn,
Till o'er the western summit steals dark night,
And, from the rugged cliff or dewy lawn,
Reluctant fades the last pale gleam of light."

Even amidst the gay scenes of her London life, in the days of her youth, she carried the remembrance of this loved retreat in her mind, and wrote home: "I am now about to enjoy agreeable society in a pleasant country—one of the first luxuries at this season of the year; but I still sigh for home and its confidential intercourse, and long to wash off the dirt of London in the sea of Cromer, to write poetry on the shore, and to live over again every scene there that memory loves." And never did she love them so dearly as now. In after years this predilection remained in full force, and latterly her visits were annually paid thither. On the present occasion some poetical pieces were added to her note-book, of which I give the following:—

LINES WRITTEN ON THE SEA-SHORE.

11*th mo.*, 1828.

" Above, lo! cloud to cloud succeeds ;
Below, the waves in surges roll,
Bounding and white, as Grecian steeds,
That bore their monarch to the goal.

" Now his swift wings the sea-bird lowers,
For well he reads the angry skies;
And ere the storm its fury pours,
For shelter to the rock he flies.

" Bird of the wave, when dangers threat,
When life looks dark, and conflicts roar,
Should deep remorse and vain regret
Rouse in my heart desponding fear,—

" May I for shelter seek, like thee—
Shelter which can all fears remove,
And to my Rock of refuge flee,
A dying Saviour's pardoning love."

From Cromer Mrs. Opie went to Northrepps, on a visit to her friends at the cottage, and, while there, she resumed the journal, which had for a time been discontinued.

" *New Year's day*, 1829.—Rose at seven o'clock, after a good night, feeling thankful to be once more under the hospitable roof of friends so very dear and so very kind. . . . . At the close of the day, went to my room, grateful for the enjoyment I have had; but, as far as Christian duty goes, I fear it has been a day of selfish enjoyment only—a day for time, but what for eternity? (3rd).—Rose, very thankful for a refreshing night; but my dreams were affecting in the retrospect. They carried me

back to the second house I ever lived in, and where my mother died. I saw her, and my dear father, and the room, etc., plainly, and all the past came rushing over me. Both gone! What a comfort to remember what my father said to me, when he announced her death to me,—'She is gone! and may you, Amelia, never have cause to blush when you see her again.' How often, during my succeeding years, did these words of parental warning recur to me, and pleasantly! Surely, when parents do their duty, children can never know a tie stronger, or as strong, as their earliest dependence on a parent's love produces; and, after the lapse of many years, how fresh and vivid still are the recollections of parental and filial love! At least, *I* feel them so."

These words are most characteristic of the writer. In conversing with Mrs. Opie, one was continually reminded of the strong hold her earliest attachments had retained on her mind. Years did not efface the recollection of those who had then been her guides and companions. Often would she refer to the early instructions of her mother, from whom she seems to have learned that careful attention to minute duties, and trifling attentions, which contribute so much to the happiness of social life, and which adorned her own conduct. "Be careful," she would say, "to fulfil the *small* duties. Delicate attentions, constantly yielded, prove that the heart is anxious to please." Above all, she con-

tinually guarded, with anxious care, against inflicting pain. I can remember many little instances of this. She once administered a rebuke to me when she heard me call some one "old." "Never call a person 'old,'" she said; "it is a *vulgar* habit, and one calculated to wound the feelings of others. My dear mother early taught me to avoid this uncourteous epithet."

Not unfrequently would she urge, most strenuously, the duty of parents and instructors to attend to the very earliest development of mind, and to watch over the first indications of disposition and temper; enforcing these exhortations by referring to the early influence exerted on her own mind, and the habits and maxims then inculcated, and never afterwards forgotten. Her standard of filial duty was proportionately high. "Honour thy father and thy mother," was a precept which seemed graven on her heart, and she could ill brook any levity of feeling, or undutifulness of conduct in children towards their parents.

My readers will, I hope, excuse this digression, and return to the diary, which continues: "(6th.) Sleet and snow abounding; made drawings of three of my friends, and rode out in a snow-storm, and enjoyed it. . . . . To bed latish, with pleasant recollections of the day, though burdened with the sin of having desired the accession of great wealth —that is, of *power* and the means of self-gratification. Who is to be trusted with such a gift?

Not I, I am sure; and I ought to know that wishes are a species of murmurs, and that, 'Nevertheless, thy will, not mine, be done,' is the only proper language. (9th.)—Read Washington Irving's Columbus.' How interesting! As well satisfied as I can be while doing nothing for the good of others. . . . . After dinner we had a most charming drive. It was a bright afternoon, and the sky over the sea was full of tints; and such a glorious setting sun, which clothed the church steeple and many other prominent objects in sunshine, as we came down the rode from Roughton. Drove to D—— B——'s, to see my epitaph on the stone, and felt thankful to have given pleasure by these lines to the son. Oh that, like the epitaph named by Legh Richmond, in his 'Young Cottager,' they may be made the means of good! Next day, drove to see *that* house where I had so often been with those most dear, now in their graves—my husband and my cousin, O. Woodhouse. Dear O.! When he went away, and sold this estate, he hoped to return and repurchase it; but he is in his Indian grave! What a trial his death was to me! But my *last* loss annihilated, in a great measure, the sense of every other.

"(19th.) . . . . Went to see the skaters. Lord Suffield came up to us; and, while we admired the tints of the sky—which were pale green over the sea, melting into pale blue and then gradually deepening, till they became the deepest, richest indigo

and purple, over our heads—he observed that he had often, but vainly, tried to convince distant friends, that our skies in Norfolk, near the sea, have the finest tints he ever saw, and pale green particularly.

"(23rd.)—We read as usual this morning. Afterwards dear A—— went in her hand-chair to visit the cottages and the sea. The cold, on going out, was intense; the wind was a keen north-easter, and blew full in our faces; while I, though shuddering in the blast, ankle deep in snow, and with fingers in agony, romantically attempted to convince myself how delightful the walk was, by repeating a sonnet to winter, written in the days of my youth. But even my own fictions had not power to warm me; and as, with blue and quivering lip, I spouted my tuneful admiration of what was taking away my breath, and inflicting pain on me besides, I ended in a hearty laugh at my own absurdity; in which, as my companion was not sensible of what I was doing, since the wind blew my words away from her, she, happily, could not join, and I kept my own counsel. . . . . On our return, I drew three likenesses; two reckoned very good. Alas! it was my last evening at the dear cottage, and it was one of love and interest, and, to me, of thankfulness that I have such friends."

The following day Mrs. Opie returned to Norwich, and the next entry in her journal is made from her own house:—

"Returned in safety to my lonely home. What a contrast to the scene I had left! but I am deeply thankful for three weeks and two days so happily spent, and for the real and many comforts to which I return."

Shortly after this time, she records the illness and death of one of her early friends, to whom, in her time of trial, bereavement, and sickness, Mrs. Opie ministered with tenderness and sympathy, watching throughout her illness, and at length closing her eyes. After dwelling on the particulars connected with this event, in the entries of her daily journal, she at length writes of the final scene—a touching tribute to her generous kindness, the affecting gratitude of the poor sufferer, and her own painful emotion. She closes this account, a day or two after the death of her friend, in these words:—"How thankful was I, as I stood by her breathless clay, to know, that she who had shed so many tears was gone where 'tears are wiped from all eyes,' and to picture the re-union of mother and daughter, where separation comes not! She survived her mother only a fortnight. Oh, what a mercy! Blessed be He who willed it so to be!"

Just at this time appeared Mr. Southey's "Colloquies," in which he referred to Mrs. Opie in these terms:—

"I have another woman in my mind's eye—one who has been the liveliest of the lively, the gayest of the gay; admired for her talents by those who

knew her only in her writings, and esteemed for her worth by those who were acquainted with her in the relations of private life; one who, having grown up in the laxest sect of semi-Christians, felt the necessity of vital religion, while attending upon her father, with dutiful affection, during the long and painful infirmities of his old age; and who has now joined a sect, among whose members she first found the lively faith for which her soul thirsted,—not losing, in the change, her warmth of heart and cheerfulness of spirit, nor gaining by it any increase of sincerity and frankness; for with these nature had endued her; and society, even that of the great, had not corrupted them. The resolution, the activity, the genius, the benevolence, which are required for such a work, are to be found in her; and were she present in person, as she is in imagination, I would say to her, ... 'Thou art the woman!' "

The work to which the poet refers, and in which he was anxious to engage the sympathies and aid of Mrs. Fry and Mrs. Opie, was the establishment of societies for reforming the internal management of hospitals and infirmaries, so as "to do for the hospitals what Mrs. Fry had already done for the prisons."

This eloquent eulogy was written, as Mr. Southey afterwards said, in a letter to Mrs. Opie, "under the influence of strong feeling;" "but," he adds,

"I have ever since been calmly convinced that I never spoke too strongly, nor said too much."

What feelings were uppermost in the mind of her who was thus honoured, on reading this flattering testimony to her worth, we learn from a letter written soon after:—

"30*th*, 4*th mo.*, 1829.

"My dear Friend, ... I will venture to tell thee the effect that reading this eulogy on my unworthy self produced on me. It made me burst into tears of agony; and wherefore? Because I felt how little I deserved such praise, or *any* praise. I felt my own short-coming and sinfulness, and I uttered these words to Him who reads the secret heart, 'Thou knowest; thou knowest!' And then he who would have enjoyed to read my praises, could not read *these*. It is sad to say, that whatever good happens to me is dashed by this consciousness at first; though gratitude abounds in a moment, and I am, I believe, happier than ever I was in my life. . . . . May this sabbath day be blessed to my dear friend, and tend, with each succeeding one, to prepare him for an eternal sabbath! Let us 'watch unto prayer,' let us endeavour to be at the foot of the cross, and let those who 'think they stand take heed lest they fall.' How often these texts occur to me! May I lay them to heart, that I may keep my feet from sliding, and feel and

know, that 'in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' "

In the month of May of this year, Mrs. Opie was, as usual, in London; and, writing to her friends at Northrepps Cottage, she says:—

"*5th mo.*, 11*th*, 1829.

"My very dear Friends,—I would write 'histories,' if I could; but for even short tales I have no time; and I am always led to feel myself very 'infirm of purpose' when I come to London. I meant to have written down what I composed on the road, and sent it to dear Northrepps Cottage; but I have not had any adequate leisure. I was ill all the way hither with a feverish cold, and kept the house next day, but was well enough by dinner to enjoy our admirable guest, B—— N——, and he was our only one; and we did, indeed, enjoy him! One word is sufficient to express him, and includes his mind, heart, manners, conversation, and character—delightful!

"In the evening came the T. Erskines. Without any affectation, B—— N—— leads the conversation to religious subjects; and happy the young, as well as the old, who can frequently associate with such a man! It was a rich day. The next morning we drove to Christie's; he was very kind, and on the 23rd, my pictures, which now I rather pine after, are to be exhibited and sold with

some by Ward and Gainsborough. He advises immediate sale, as times grow worse and worse.

"H—— E—— having given me a reserved ticket for the Jews' meeting, I then drove to the Freemasons' Hall, which I found nearly full. As they passed, I had an opportunity of shaking hands with F. C. Wilberforce and Simeon. Sir Thomas Baring was in the chair; and I heard twelve speakers, and was there from twelve to near half-past five; but I was so deeply interested, that I was not tired. There was much eloquence, and, what was better, a Christian spirit and Christian humility, I think, pervading all, and manifested very visibly. You will read the whole proceedings in the Record; therefore, I will not name the speakers. We are going now to the British and Foreign School Society meeting." . . . .

In the month of June following, Mrs. Opie visited Paris, and spent some months there. An account of this trip is given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

It had long been the intention of Mrs. Opie to visit the Continent, and especially Paris. While Dr. Alderson was living, she found herself unable, of course, to carry out this wish, but now that she was left entirely free, she availed herself of the favourable opportunity. A short account of this trip, and of one she made in the course of a few months later, was written by her, some two or three years after her return; and from this little narrative, the reader will perceive what were the impressions produced on her mind by her sojourn in Paris, and what lessons she drew from the varied and striking scenes she witnessed. She writes:—

"In the summer of 1829, I set off for Paris, to visit a dear relation who had married a French gentleman, and was residing there. It was not without mixed emotions, in which, however, those of pleasure predominated, that I re-entered that France, which, in 1802, I had left a republic, but which, in 1829, was once more a monarchy, and under the government of the Bourbons. The morning after my arrival, I felt impatient to re-

visit those streets which I had, in former days, found so full of interest; but still more impatient to go to the Jardin des Plantes, and deliver the letter of introduction I had to Sophie D., the daughter-in-law of Cuvier.

"Little did I think, while leaving my address and letter at the house, that it would lead to an intimacy with its beloved and distinguished inhabitant, which formed the delight of my residence in Paris; that I should become the constant visiter at the tea-table of la Baronne Cuvier every seventh-day evening for many months, during the years 1829, '30, and '31; and that I should learn to love, as well as to admire, the great man of the house, around whom, as the centre, I saw so many stars in science and literature delighting to assemble.

"Alas! still less did I imagine that the time was not far distant when death should again hover over that unique and hospitable mansion, to carry off the highly gifted father, as it had, only four years before, removed his admirable and pious daughter; and that we should have to deplore the loss of him whom France, and even the world, have united to lament as the first of scientific discoverers, and most enlightened of philosophers.*

* Mrs. Opie addressed the following touching lines to his memory:—

"While his fair fame was spread from zone to zone,
Within his circle like a sun he shone;
And while the world his powers of mind admired,
At home, his heart devoted love inspired. . . .

"As little also did I think, while contemplating the Hôtel de Ville, as the frowning memorial of scenes of blood and horror, that I should, in the succeeding year, behold it with such different associations; that I should see the (comparatively) bloodless flag of the tricolour waving from its ancient roof, and that I should drive within its ponderous gates, and ascend its gloomy staircase, to enter the illuminated 'salons' of its inhabitant, O. B., the Préfet de la Seine; and while partaking of tea, à l'Anglaise, from the hands of the young and charming wife, should listen to the captivating conversation of the eloquent husband.

"Little, too, did I expect that the Place de Grève, that spot so full of appalling recollections, would in future be sacred to the triumphs of constitutional freedom, and that the Hôtel de Ville would become the scene of entertainments given to Lafayette and the citizen-king.

'Twas sweet that voice of melody to hear,
Distinct, sonorous, stealing on the ear;
And watch, to mark some sudden gesture throw
The hair aside, that veil'd that wondrous brow—
That brow, the throne of genius and of thought,
And mind, which all the depths of science sought
Alas! that voice is mute, and on that brow
No eye can mark the kindling radiance now:
Death's seal is there—a seal no power can move,
Not e'en the prayer of agonizing love.
And while all nations share their deep regret,
His home's sad circle feel their *sun has set.*"

"And, marked as everything in this world is by the certainty of change, what changes did I not behold, in a few short months, during my last visit to Paris! I found my friend, Lafayette, General-in-chief of the National Guard. I left him about to return, like Cincinnatus, to his farm. I found O. B., Préfet de la Seine, and residing at the Hôtel de Ville. I left him, returned with simple dignity to comparatively private life, and to those legal duties by which his talents and his industry had led him to fame and honours.

"What other changes may await him or me, private or public individuals, the kingdom of France, or our own beloved land, is known only to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death. How blessed, even here, must those be who are enabled to fix their hopes and affections on that futurity where no change comes, and on that Being who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!'"

During both these visits to Paris, Mrs. Opie wrote numerous letters to her friends in England, giving lively pictures of what she saw and heard passing around her; and her journal recorded the daily incidents that occurred. It is not my intention to dwell on these, and I will only give the reader one extract from her note book, written shortly before the close of her first stay in Paris. It is her account of a visit she paid to La Grange, the country residence of General Lafayette.

"I thought (she writes) the approach to La Grange beautiful, an ancient castle with a lawn, à l'Anglaise. The general was, as usual, fresh, benevolent looking, and admirable in all ways. His uncle, the celebrated Ségur, was staying there. His daughters, son-in-law, and grandchildren, all pleased me. After a most happy day I retired to rest, thankful at heart for the unmerited mercies I had enjoyed.

"The next morning, at ten, we assembled in the salon. The general led me down to breakfast, composed of hot meat and pottage, wines and fruit, and ending with coffee and dry toast. After breakfast the weather cleared, and the general showed his guests his farm; all but the Norfolk and other cows, which were out. The evening was most interesting. The general gave us an account of the early events of the Revolution; the other gentlemen who were present, assisting. The time passed only too quickly; but when in my own room, I sat up and read the memoirs of Ségur; and with a curious feeling laid me down, knowing that I should see both him and Lafayette next day."

On the 20th of October, "the saddest of anniversaries" (that of her father's death), she left Paris, and three days after arrived, "thankful for safe return," in her native country. After visiting some friends in town she pursued her homeward course, and there was immediately occupied with those varied engagements which had, for a season,

been interrupted. Writing about a month after her return (2nd of Nov.), she says:—"My silence, dear friend, has not been without excuse; I have had committee on committee, and a sick servant also. . . . In the midst of all this, I have experienced such a sense of Divine guidance, such peace of mind, and conviction of the emptiness of everything but what tends to the Saviour, and almost a total negation of self; a feeling, as if this little fireside bounded my every wish, and that after a morning spent in Christian objects, I wanted nothing but my solitary sitting, my Bible, and communion with the Most High;—and is not this a wonderful mercy shown to such a sinner as I have been?" . . . .

Three weeks after, Mrs. Opie wrote to Mr. Southey as follows:—

"*Norwich*, 11*th mo.*, 24*th*, 1829.

"My dear Friend,—Illness, and other circumstances, over which I have seemed to have no power, have, since my return to Norwich, prevented my writing to thee. Thy letter reached me at Paris; I did not for a moment think of answering it then, because I was wholly unacquainted with the societies to which it alludes, and could not obtain the necessary information; but on my return to England I found E. Fry deep in thy book, and believing that she had already made a few steps, at

least, in the career to which thou hast pointed in thy eloquent address to me. . . . .

"Thy letter was truly gratifying to me, but humbling also, as it led me to look into myself, and feel how little worthy I am of such an appeal, and how little able to answer it as it ought to be answered. I left Paris (where I stayed four months and a fortnight at the house of a near and dear relation) with a heart full of love and gratitude towards every person there, but also filled with pity, strong disapprobation, and alarm. Still, when I consider the efforts making by many pious and good persons to spread the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus amongst them, I can answer the question, 'Can these bones live?' not only 'Thou knowest,' but that I think they will. Farewell.

"I am thy grateful and affectionate friend,

"A. O."

To this letter Mr. Southey replied, under date 29th November, stating that he had been in correspondence with Mr. Hornby, the rector of Winwick, who, in concert with a gentleman of Liverpool, had undertaken to set on foot an institution for the purpose of educating a better class of persons as nurses for the poor. In this infant project Mr. Southey expresses his satisfaction, and urges the great necessity for such exertions on a large scale; so that nurses might be trained, "on

whose competent knowledge and probity, not to say piety," reliance might be placed; whereas "at present there are no wickeder wretches on earth than some of the women who follow this way of life." He adds, that nothing in the system need be adopted at variance with the feelings of a Protestant country, and says: "If the Roman Catholics take up the scheme before us, I know no other means, even at this time, whereby they would be so likely to extend their pestilent superstition." He concludes with expressing his desire that Mrs. Opie and Mrs. Fry would turn their thoughts to this subject, that the sick might be "rescued from the hard hand of mercenary ignorance" through their assistance. In the P.S. to this letter, he mentions a droll incident: "I must tell you that Thomas Wilkinson told me the other day, when you were in the country, it was said at Carlisle, that Amelia Opie was expected to speak at the meeting there. The name was improperly caught, and a report spread that an *Ethiopian* was to speak there!"

This letter Mrs. Opie sent to Mrs. Fry, who, in reply, said: . . . . "I think there is much truth in its contents. I also wish thee to weigh the subject, and if thou feelest, as well as seest thy road open to it, I shall be glad; because I have seen the thing wanted to be done ever since the days of my youth." However, it seems that Mrs. Fry questioned the eligibleness of commencing such a

trial in the country; for she asks, "Is not London the place to begin such a work?"

Some years subsequently the thoughts of this admirable woman, Mrs. Fry, reverted to the subject; and she commenced a small society on the plan of Mr. Fliedner's establishment at Kaiserswerth, with the assistance of her sister, Mrs. S. Gurney, and some other ladies.

"The exertions of this little society (says a passage in Mrs. Fry's Life, vol. ii., p. 383) have been greatly circumscribed, and it may be looked on more as an experiment, than as an object attained. The help of the 'nursing sisters' has been sought, and greatly valued, by persons of all classes, from royalty to the poorest and most destitute."

At the present day much interest and effort have been directed to this most important and Christian object; and now all hearts are sympathizing with those who have voluntarily offered themselves for this service of love on behalf of our poor sick and wounded soldiers, and with the heroic woman who has placed herself at their head.

The summer of the following year (1830) was productive of great and alarming events at Paris; and it was natural, indeed inevitable, that the feelings of Mrs. Opie should be deeply and painfully interested in watching their progress. She had so recently left the spot where these scenes of alarm were transpiring, that her thoughts would revert

with a special concern to those who were now in hourly jeopardy, and exposed to dangers of a terrible nature. She wrote, in the month of August, a letter to her friends at Northrepps, expressing her emotions, and an extract from that letter will best show the excitement of her feelings:—

"*Norwich*, 8*th mo.*, 2*nd*, 1830.

. . . . "What alarming news from Paris! The Chamber of Deputies dissolved for ever, and the liberty of the press abolished! We saw the result of these tidings in the fearful prospective, and yesterday came the affecting news that the National Guard had reorganized themselves; that Lafayette was at their head; that the Chamber had assembled and voted their sitting perpetual, and had declared the throne vacant; that the king, ministers, court, and ambassadors, had left Paris, and were at Vincennes, or Brussels; that cannon was planted against the city; that it had fired and killed 5000 persons, and the beautiful Rue de Rivoli was running with blood, and that they are to be *starved* into submission. I humbly hope I shall be enabled to pray for my friends there, which is all I *can* do. You will readily believe how anxious, interested, and excited I feel. I was, and am, writing on the scenes of the former Revolution, little dreaming that another was so near, in which some whom I love and reverence must be actors. Well! I must endeavour to turn from the thought of it as much as I can." . . . .

Unable, probably, to keep the prudential resolve with which she concludes this letter, Mrs. Opie, full of irrepressible anxiety to be on the scene of action, very shortly came to the resolution to repair to Paris. She seems to have allowed but few of her friends to know of her determination, perhaps anticipating their remonstrances and objections. Her anxiety, however, was so great as to affect her health and spirits; and, after a few weeks' irresolution, her plans were arranged, and she was on the way to Paris. Her stay there proved longer in the event than she had probably intended or anticipated. Of the letters she wrote home during this period, many are still in existence. I will give but one of them, addressed to her old friend "Sarah Rose," and descriptive of various subjects in which she was interested at the time; it bears date,

"*Hotel de Douvres, Rue de la Paix,*
11*th mo.*, 30*th*, 1830.

. . . . "This *shall* be a letter-writing day, dear friend. Hitherto all has prospered with me, and will, I trust, continue to do so. We are more quiet here than you seem to be in my dear native land. Even the ex-ministers seem forgotten; the people threaten them no longer—audibly, at least. Violent excitements, if not kept alive, soon wear themselves out. I had such an interesting morning yesterday at the Halle aux Draps. It was the distribution of prizes at the boys' and girls' schools.

I went alone, and had time to contemplate, with great interest, the young population before me. The boys were dressed in a dark brown tunic, a little *à la Grecque*, and this added to the illusion, when I fancied that I beheld a race of young republicans. A very good liberal address was given by the mayor of the arrondissement, and immediately after, the young voices of the children were lifted up in songs of joy and praise. I felt my eyes fill, and my heart beat, as I remembered how lately blood had run along the streets of Paris, and that probably some of the singers had been orphaned by the late revolution. . . . .

"I was interrupted here by a visit from Quatrefuges du Fesq, Commandant de la Garde Nationale du département du Gard, a Protestant gentleman of large estate. He seems a worthy man, and I was glad to find that he belongs to a Bible Society, *chez lui;* and he is going to present me to its president. He is delighted at being one of my agents, and I have met two English clergymen, who are equally willing. To go on with the schools: when the crowns of flowers and greens and the books were all distributed, a letter from Appert, the philanthropist, was read, announcing one prize from the queen, which was given to the girl who had already won the prize for good conduct; and she came, looking so meek and pretty, in her crown of white roses. One child who got a prize was only six years old.

"The parties on the 7th day evening at the Jardin des Plantes (Baron Cuvier's) are pleasanter than ever: ambassadeurs, savans, sages, députés, historiens, etc., etc. Sophie D., the worthy sister of the admirable and lamented Clêmentine, has, in conjunction with some other ladies, instituted a committee of management, for so many poor deaf and dumb girls. The object is to teach them the means of maintaining themselves; but it is sad up-hill work. May He who alone can bless such labours of love, bless these!

"The Paris intellectual world, just now, runs after a new sect—the St. Simoniens: the founder is a St. Simon, of the Duc de St. Simon's family; but his disciples preach up equality of property. The thing is, I suspect, more political than anything else in its object; but on a 1st day there is a religious preaching, and the room overflows; so it does on a week-day evening, when there are only lectures. I am sometimes tempted to go one evening, as they agree with the Friends on two points. Nous verrons." . . . .

"12*th mo.*, 1*st*, 1830. To-day I have had an unexpected and most welcome visit from E. M. Her account of the state of the religious world here was cheering. May her hopes for this great, but, on some points, blinded country, be realized; and may the prayers of her Christian heart be fulfilled. There are many labourers in the field. Oh may it truly be white for the harvest!

"My friends here have persuaded me to be 'at home,' on one particular day, and so, on 7th day morning I receive from one to five, and I have '*beaucoup de monde*.' . . . With love, thine,

"A. Opie."

Mrs. Opie continued in Paris till the month of April, 1831. During that time she saw "many and different scenes," and events of a stirring nature transpired. It is not, perhaps, to be wondered at that some of her most sincere and attached friends felt a degree of anxiety, lest her lengthened residence in the gay capital of France, where she was surrounded by admirers, and found so much to gratify and charm her taste and feelings, should be injurious to her best and highest interests. They feared lest she should be "drawn away from the simplicity" of faith and manners, which must ever characterize the true Christian in his intercourse with the world. These anxieties were natural, and the expression of them salutary. The knowledge that such care was felt on her behalf, that such watchful eyes of love followed her movements, awakened her gratitude and influenced her conduct. The union that subsisted between her and the Friends with whom she had united herself, was a true and efficient one, exerting an abiding and happy influence, and having a deep hold on her affections as well as her principles. Traces of this feeling are everywhere to be found in her journals,

which continually refer to the dear friends whom she had left behind in her native city, and in religious fellowship with whom she rejoiced, even when severed from them in "a strange land." Her favourite tract, Mr. Gurney's "Letter to a Friend on the Authority, Purposes, and Effects of Christianity," she got translated into French, during her stay in Paris, and largely circulated among her friends there. That it "was in her heart" to use all the influence she possessed over others for good, her frequent aspirations, recorded in secret, touchingly evince. It was "a longing," though, as she sometimes feared, "a vain desire," prompting her to speak the word in season, or to indite the friendly line of pious expostulation. There were among her loose papers, several rough copies of verses composed in this spirit, and, as I have said, her diary abounds in entries indicative of her sympathy with all that was good and holy in others, and of her readiness to seize every favourable opportunity for winning the attention of the thoughtless and the unbelieving to the great truths of the gospel.

Those who best knew Mrs. Opie will readily comprehend how it was that she could, in a manner somewhat peculiar to herself, and partly perhaps resulting from her early habits, as well as from her natural temperament, take so lively an interest in all the varied forms of life and society. Her nature was many-sided and pliant; she divided her thoughts, her sympathy, and her efforts among all

that asked a share in her regard, and could turn with undiminished interest from scenes of high excitement, to small and apparently uncongenial subjects. To each claim she responded in turn, and the tale of every human heart had power to interest her. Hence, when she returned to her solitary home, and once more resumed the quiet and comparatively monotonous life she led there, she lost none of her spring, nor appeared in the smallest degree less keenly alive to all that claimed her attention.

The society of her friends and the works of charity she had laid aside awhile, were returned to and resumed with complacency and zeal. She was especially engaged, about this time, in the cause of the Ladies' Branch Bible Society in Norwich. Mr. C. Dudley was anxious to effect improvements in its management, and to enlarge its operations, and there were meetings and committees at the Friends' chapel in Goat-lane, for the purpose, at which Mrs. Opie assisted. She took a district, and visited among the poor, as a collector of their weekly pence; and thus was brought into contact with many scenes of want, and sorrow, and suffering, that drew forth all the yearning pity of her heart, and found employment for its charitable promptings.

In a letter, written shortly after her return, she gives a lively description of her journey from London, and shows the feelings of her heart at this time.

"*Norwich, 6th mo., 30th*, 1832.

"My dear Friend,—. . . I had a pleasant journey down, with a most agreeable companion, who never contradicted me; had the same opinions on all subjects as myself; had read all my works, and admired them of course! who slept when I slept, and woke when I did, which was at three o'clock in the morning; but at that hour my companion ceased to be agreeable, for she began to preach to me:

> 'And, like the dread handwriting on the wall,
> To hold past actions up to my review;'

till, at last, unable to say nay to her accusations, and overpowered by their force, I happily recollected I had a pocket edition of the Psalms with me, and Isaac Crewdson's 'Spirit of Prayer' and I took refuge in them from my troublesome monitor, who was—no other than the egregious Amelia Opie—my own self. She and I came alone together all the way. I found my garden a wilderness, and very like the sluggard's; but my roses were blooming in the midst, seemingly undisturbed by the slovenly appearance around them, like a poet full of glowing thoughts and fine images, though writing in a garret in Grub-street. On 2nd day I hope to see the long grass disappear, and order come out of chaos.

"E. R. came on 5th day to visit me. I took her a walk to see the Cathedral Close, Bishop's Palace, and my poor uncle's pretty garden, around

which I had the pain of seeing him dragged, a wreck of former days. That was a sight I could have spared. Yet, no. Such mementos of the frailness of everything of mortal tenure are not to be avoided, and ought to be salutary. In the evening we walked round our Castle Hill, and I found in my companion an amiable aptitude to be pleased with all she saw, and enjoy everything.

"How differently one feels towards persons when one believes their days to be numbered—visibly so, I mean—to what one does when one first sees them, and judges them without beholding the grave in their horizon. How lenient one becomes to their faults! What an air of interest is thrown around them! One listens with more attention and indulgence to their remarks, and seeks eagerly to discover in their conversation a moral preparation for death, more agreeable than the physical one, which we discover with so much pain. If these feelings are entertained towards those whose days are visibly numbered, the same indulgence *ought* to be shown to every one, for all are alike 'appointed to die,' holding their mortal tenure only at the pleasure of the Most High. I therefore earnestly desire that I may not be found among the backbiters, the haters, and the severe animadverters on the faults of others: amongst them, however, my travelling companion, A. Opie, had the impertinence to rank me. . . . I can write no more. . . .

"A. O."

The feelings expressed in this letter exerted an habitual influence on the mind of the writer. Thus, she says to one of her friends, after expressing the pleasure she felt in having been able to render a kind attention to a deceased friend:—"I often think that, if we did but consider the brevity of life, we should be more eager in our endeavours to serve and please our friends and neighbours than we are, and more careful to avoid giving them pain. It is, I know, a truism; but it is one I often try, though in vain, to remember and be guided by—that, if we could but recollect, even in youth, that we may be cut off from life and repentance and amendment, in a moment, we could not help acting in a very different, and more creditable, manner towards others. What would then become of the jeers, and the flings, and the censures, the misapprehensions and hatreds, in which so many of us think it allowable to indulge?" . . .

In the year 1832, Mrs. Opie sold her house in St. George's, which she had been desirous to do from the time of her father's death. In this residence Dr. Alderson lived during the latter years of his life, and Mrs. Opie had continued to inhabit it, with one short interval, until this time. There it was that I first saw her. The rooms in which she received her friends were hung with many of Mr. Opie's paintings; one, the well-known picture of "The Secret Correspondence, or Love-letter," was hung over the mantel-piece of the drawing-

room, while the "Shepherd Boy" occupied the same place of honour in the dining-room. There were, besides these, many others, including the portraits which formed the subjects of six of her "Lays for the Dead." Parties of friends frequently assembled in these apartments, among whom were some whose memory is still cherished with love and regret. Of these, the Rev. Joseph Kinghorn was one of the most endeared and honoured. To his conversation Mrs. Opie listened with respectful interest; and, indeed, it was always worthy to be attentively considered, for rarely or never did he speak, without imparting information, or suggesting some topic of interest. After the death of Mr. Kinghorn, the "Father and Daughter" was found among the books of his library. It was probably the only work of fiction admitted into that sanctum, destined only to contain ponderous tomes of divinity, and erudite treatises on theological subjects; and much pleased was Mrs. Opie when she was told of the circumstance. This excellent, learned, and holy man died in the month of September, 1832; and Mrs. Opie did not see, without a tribute of heartfelt regret, the departure of one so venerated. She listened to the account of his dying moments, and wrote the following

"LINES" ON HEARING IT SAID CONTINUALLY, THAT OUR LATE REVERED FRIEND, J. KINGHORN, WAS 'FIT TO DIE.'

"Hail, words of truth! that Christian comfort give;
But then, 'the fit to die,' how fit to live!

To live, a bright example to mankind;
'Feet to the lame, and eyesight to the blind;'
To lift the lamp, the word of God, on high,
Direct to Calvary's mount the sinner's eye;
To tread the path the first apostles trod,
And earn that precious name, 'a man of God.'
And thence the grief,—he lives for us no more,
Whose loss alike all Christian hearts deplore:
But faith, exulting, joins the general cry,
The fit to live was greatly 'fit to die!'"

Another of the guests occasionally to be seen under Mrs. Opie's roof, in those days, was William Youngman, of honoured memory; famed (and somewhat feared) for his critical acumen and keenness in debate. His fine head, brilliant eye, and acute glance, immediately attracted attention, which was riveted when he talked; and when it pleased him to communicate his stores, it was well to listen and to learn.*

To all her guests Mrs. Opie delighted to show

* He was one of those who frequented a social monthly meeting for religious intercourse and conversation, held during many years, principally at the suggestion and through the influence of Mr. Kinghorn. Portions of Scripture were read and freely discussed on these occasions, and Mr. Youngman's remarks were usually full of point and suggestion. As these meetings were held at the houses of the different families whose principals united in them, the young people of the household were always present; and I shall never forget the interest and pleasure they afforded me, nor can I help wishing that something similar were in general use among the friendly circles of good people now-a-days. I know of nothing more likely to inform and improve young and inquiring minds just awakening to interest on religious subjects, and needing direction and assistance in their researches

the pictures that surrounded her; and it was with evident complacency that she received any tribute to the genius of her husband: she felt proud and pleased when his works were duly appreciated. The mention of this reminds me of a trifling incident that occurred about this time. The Rev. Edward Irving, being then on a visit at Norwich, went to pay his respects to her. He was charmed by the fascination of her manner and appearance, and on being asked afterwards, by the friend who accompanied him, what he thought of her pictures, (to which, as usual, she had pointed attention,) he responded, with eager haste: "I thought nought o' the paintings; it was the bonnie livin' picture I saw."

It will be readily imagined that Mrs. Opie could not quit the house, endeared to her by so many tender reflections, without much and poignant regret. Yet there were many causes that combined to make it desirable she should do so. Not only was it far too large to suit the convenience of a single individual, but it necessarily involved the maintenance of a considerable establishment; and this was incompatible with her wishes, which induced her to prefer some arrangements that would allow her to be occasionally absent from Norwich. That she might be the more entirely free in her movements, she determined to give up housekeeping for some time.

On the eve of her departure, she thus expressed

her emotions in writing to a friend: . . . "I wrote my last letter to thee at a moment full of care and anxiety, and I *now* write at one of the most painful epochs of my life. I shall, in two hours, quit for ever the house where I have lived twenty-four years, and passed the most important and interesting period of my life. But write I *would;* I could not bear to delay my apology for what may have appeared harsh and unjust. . . .

"Farewell. I write in great haste and some agitation.

"A. Opie."

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Opie, having succeeded in effecting the sale of her house, and completed the necessary arrangements, dismissed her servants, and found herself free to accomplish a desire which, she said, had for many years been near her heart, namely, to visit Cornwall, her husband's native county; intending to make her stay there as long as she found it desirable. On the 20th of September she left London for Falmouth, viâ Plymouth; and, on finding herself in Cornwall, wrote thus:—

"I cannot describe the sensation I felt at being in my poor husband's native county, which I had so often heard him lavish in praise of; but *his* part of it was bold and rocky, and without trees; *this* was rich and wooded, though rocky, and the low walls, made of a red stone, appeared to me particularly picturesque. Indeed, at every moment, scenery of increasing beauty presented itself to the view. Before we arrived at Truro, I was extremely pleased with a long dell, called 'The Forest,' extending to a considerable length. Across this dell very large forest trees bent over, forming a natural bower, beautiful and magnificent; and, as

I concluded must be the case, a fine stream ran through the hollow; and, at its termination, there is a gentleman's seat. I fear that I *envied* the owner his delightful residence.

"Rocks, woods, and river, were the constant succession of objects which my delighted eyes gazed on, as we proceeded on our way; and the Vale of Perran fully equalled my expectations, though I could not explore its heights and look down on its lovely valley. Penryn is a striking scene, from the business going forward there, and the romantic scenery around its river. Next came the beautiful harbour of Falmouth, on which we looked down as we drew near: it quite realized my high-raised expectations.

"At the inn, I found my friend awaiting my arrival. He drove me up an almost perpendicular street, which reminded me of Whitby, where the streets are all precipitous. When I reached W. Place, and the kind inhabitants introduced me into the house, I was overpowered, as it were, by the sense of beauty with which the view from the window impressed me. The bay was blue as heaven, and there seemed nothing between us and it but a gently undulating lawn, enamelled with flowering shrubs. To the left rose the Castle of Pendennis, on its high and verdant promontory; and the whole was so like an Italian scene, that I could scarcely fancy myself in England. I felt deep thankfulness when

I retired to my charming room at night, not only for my safe arrival, but that the lines were fallen to me in such pleasant places."

Mrs. Opie, after remaining a month at Falmouth, left her friends there on the 22nd of October, and proceeded to Perran, on a visit to another branch of the same family; and from this time she seems to have kept a journal, from which I purpose giving occasional extracts. On her way to Perran she visited a mine, in which was "the largest steam-engine, perhaps, in Europe." The whole thing, she said, was "vast even to sublimity;" and the tremendous volume of sound occasioned by letting off the steam, completely overcame her nerves. "Afterwards," she writes, "we went to see the women at work. The first sight of the mining district exceeded all my ideas of its desolation—a desolation only equalled by its population."

The next entry in her diary tells of her arrival at Perran Vale "and all its loveliness," where she settled down most comfortably, although her thoughts reverted with regret to the dear friends whom she had left. The following weeks were spent, with much enjoyment, in the society of those around, and in making visits and calls; and the long autumnal evenings passed most agreeably in drawing, reading, and working; occasionally, too, themes on a given subject were written. One of these, on "Punctuality," was preserved among her

papers; and, as this was especially a virtue in which she delighted, it was evidently written *con amore*. Its conclusion is amusing, and as it is not long, I venture to give it.

"There is a habit so injurious to the practice of punctuality, that I must mention it before I conclude. I call it a habit of *hanging fire*. There are persons who get up to go away, an hour perhaps before they really depart; and who linger at the door of the room, make a full stop on the landing-place or in the hall; and if one attend them to the door, linger still on the threshold; and even when in the street, calling up fresh energies, elevate their voices in a few parting words. How can such as these ever be strictly punctual? I would particularly warn young persons against such a habit. I would say, 'When you are going, go; for, remember, the moments you thus waste in loitering, are bringing even you, the young, nearer every instant to eternity.' I feel that it will become me to conclude my imperfect sketch as fast as possible, and I will do so by giving an anecdote of George, commonly called *Beau* Brummell.

"Amongst his other follies, B. had that of choosing to be always too late for dinner. Wherever he was invited he liked to be waited for. He thought it was a proof of his fashion and consequence; and the higher the rank of his entertainer, the later was the arrival of this impudent parvenu. The Marquis of Abercorn had, for some time, sub-

mitted to this oft-repeated trial of his patience, but at length he would bear it no longer. Accordingly, one day when he had invited Brummell to dine, he desired to have the dinner on the table punctually at the time appointed. The servants obeyed, and Brummell and the *cheese* arrived together. The wondering beau was desired by the master of the house to sit down. He vouchsafed no apology for what had happened, but coolly said, 'I hope, Mr. B., cheese is not disagreeable to you.' It is said that Brummell was never late at that house in future; and here selfishness became the source of punctuality.

"*Perran Vale,* "A. OPIE.
"11*th mo.*, 7*th.*, 1832."

On the 21st of November, taking a "sorrowful farewell of dear Perran," our traveller proceeded to St. Agnes, where she received a kindly welcome from her worthy relatives, and a few days after wrote the following letter:—

"*To Sarah Rose, Bracondale, Norwich.*

"*St. Agnes*, 11*th mo.*, 26*th*, 1832.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"I shall begin by what is uppermost with me just now. Last night, in the papers, I had the shock of seeing the death of Lady Stafford. What a loss! what a wide-spreading loss! How sudden

her removal! But it is those who are left that must mourn. One cannot think but all is well with *her*, poor dear. I used to lament I knew so little of her, but now I rejoice. . . .

"I am here with my poor husband's nephew, and his wife and family, which consists of Edward Opie, the painter; a boy of ten, and of a gentle and pleasing young woman named Amelia, after me, at the desire of my poor sister.* They have just lost a lovely girl of thirteen, whose loss has sunk deep into the hearts of her parents. The whole family have soft, pleasing manners; in short, I like them all. . . . Yesterday I dined at Harmony Cot, where my husband and all the family were born and bred. It is a most sequestered cottage, whitewashed and thatched; a hill rising high above it, and another in front; trees and flower-beds before it, which, in summer, must make it a pretty spot. Now, it is not a tempting abode, but there are two good rooms in it, and I am glad I have seen it.

* This was Mr. Opie's sister, who during his last illness most tenderly aided in nursing him. Mrs. Opie, in her Memoir of her husband, speaks of her with affectionate regard in these words:—"Let me be thankful for the presence of that sister so dear to him, who, by sharing with me the painful yet precious tasks of affection, enabled me to keep from his bed all hired nurses—all attendants, indeed, but our deeply interested selves—that was, indeed, a consolation." During this Cornish visit, Mrs. O. frequently alludes to the regret she experienced, that one whom she had always remembered with affection was no longer living, to welcome her, and to go over with her the memories of the past.

"I was at Falmouth one month, at R. W. Fox's; and at his mother's, at Perran and Falmouth, another month, and came hither last 4th day; and I go to Truro to stay till the beginning of next month, when I go to Burncoose; and I hope to take up my abode in lodgings of my own, at Penzance, by the 2nd of the next year, if not before; but I have so many invitations. I was, on 5th day, up St. Anne's Beacon: such a magnificent sea-view!

"How many persons have died even in the short time of my absence! To-day I have had a letter from Lady M——, like herself, admirable. How I wish I were what I am not, and fear I never may be, *weaned* from the pleasures of this life, and given only to preparation for another! I sometimes reprove myself for the happiness I feel, and my health is so perfect. . . .

"I am thy ever affectionate friend,

"A. Opie."

Her journal proceeds:—"(7th day, 1st of 12th mo.)—Went to see the market, and institution, or museum. (1st day, 2nd.)—Went to meeting. Snowy. In the evening came on an awful storm, thunder loud, lightning vivid. When it subsided, W. T. opened the windows for me to see what he called his *illumination*. It was the large Methodist meeting-house lighted up, and towering in radiance in the valley on the left. (4th day, 5th.)—Quar-

terly Meeting. A full attendance of Friends from all parts of the country. Several Friends spoke to great edification, and the meeting was well attended in the evening. Next morning our friends left, with a solemn, sweet, though short, parting benediction. (1st day, 9th.)—Lodgings suitable procured for me at Penzance: much pleased to hear it. After dinner we walked up the hill beyond the house, to see to advantage the remarkable and sublime appearance of the clouds, which resembled the glaciers, and formed ridges of ice, like those on the Mont de Glace. It was a sublime spectacle."

On the 10th of January, 1833, she left St. Agnes for Penzance. The day was one of incessant wind and rain. Her first glimpse of the Mount and its bay was a momentary one, caught in passing. "I turned," she says, "to the coach window on the left, just in time to see it in all its glory, and quite near me, the billows lashing its rocky sides." The lodgings which had been provided proved quite to her mind. "A good drawing-room, a decent bedroom, and a fine sea-view, are my possessions here," she says, and significantly adds, "with *leisure*: may I employ it well." The next day her diary mentions her first walk on the shore, and she prettily apostrophizes the Mount. "Beautiful Mount! I long to be better acquainted with thee. When I first saw it, it was very dark; then it was sunlit; then dark and misty; then light again, and green as an emerald was the flood swelling gainst it, and edged with snow-white feathers."

The letter that follows, addressed to her "dear and long-attached friend, Sarah Rose," never reached her; for, only the day after it was written, Mrs. Opie received the tidings of her death, which she recorded in her diary, with an expression of pain and regret, yet at the same time with thankfulness for the assurance she felt that it was indeed a mercy to her, who had long suffered under a fatal malady, and who was prepared, by Divine grace, for the great change.

"*To S. Rose, Bracondale, Norwich.*

"*Regent's Terrace, Penzance,*

"1*st mo.*, 14*th*, 1833.

"It is long since the receipt of any letter has given me so much pleasure as the one I received from thee, beloved friend. . . . I intend to write to my friend, J. Beecroft, but I defer doing so till I have visited St. Michael's Mount. I am to enjoy the great pleasure of passing a night in that rocky wonder, and of visiting the rock and ramparts by moonlight. I shall also see the sun rise and set there—a great privilege; whether I may have the bells set a-ringing or not, I can't tell, but I should like to judge of all the effects possible in that unique spot.

"I have lately been staying at Lord de Dunstanville's, and he it was who wrote to Sir John St. Aubyn's housekeeper, desiring a bed to be prepared for me, whenever I choose to go; and that

is at the next full moon, (a suspicious circumstance *n'est ce pas?*) But, dear me! how should there be any moon where there is no sun? Only once have I seen the latter since I came here, last 5th day, the 10th.—Wind, rain, and no fish! and I usually live on fish; but then, in two minutes I can be on the beach, and see the Mount. . . . .

"Oh, what a blessing is leisure, and its promoter, solitude! I can say, with deep thankfulness, that I have been only too happy with my dear Cornish friends; *too* happy, because I have been idle and useless; but, much as I have enjoyed this very precious society, I cannot express my delight at feeling that I have fourteen hours before me when I rise, or more, to do what I will in, and write and read as I choose. . . . . At Paris, the glass is many degrees below freezing point; here there is rain and wind, but no frost. I fear, indeed *know*, that you have frost, but I hope thou feelest it not. I will add that my health is perfect, and I need the sorrows of my friends to *sober* my spirits. My drawing-room commands the bay, and on one side the town and hills of N., washed by the sea.

"Now, to talk of thyself.—I am cheered much by thy letter, and I humbly trust that the best of all cheerfulness, that which results from entire resignation, is thine now, and will be to the end. If we 'live to the Lord,' we shall also 'die to the Lord;' and, I believe, persons afflicted with incurable complaints are permitted to live on and suffer,

that they may be made profitable examples. . . . . To-morrow I am going to dine and sleep at Sir Rose Price's. I have many letters yet unacknowledged; I like to put my friends in my debt. I am paying off mine: I sent seven yesterday to the post. Farewell. Remember, I must hear from thee again.

"Thine affectionate friend,

"A. OPIE."

The journal proceeds:—"(18th.) The day lovely; walked to find the tombs of my cousins. Such a walk! the air balmy, the bay blue and gold, the Mount darkly grand. I saw it almost all the way. The churchyard is pretty, the tomb simple; in its railing is another like it, over a mother and son, friends of Philothea.* On our return, the Mount was bright: saw the granite rocks; and the sea was, first green, and then a bright blue. So lovely! Not at all tired; enjoyed my walk and my dinner. In the evening I wrote to General Lafayette, and E. M. (5th day, 24th.)—A bright and dazzling sun, silvering over the bellowing sea, like great wit and talent throwing a lustre over turbulent passions, under an agreeable surface. This day four months I came to dear Falmouth. What

* In her "Lays," p. 72, there are some lines "On a Mother and Daughter, relations of mine, who died at Penzance within a short time of each other;" beginning:—

"Pure, lovely, learned, pious, wise,
There, by her mother's side, Philothea lies."

happy months! Blessed be His goodness, who willed them so to be!

"(1st day, 27th.)—To meeting. Read Newton's Cardiphonia,* and in the Acts: an edifying evening. Still, to bed discouraged, though much enabled to pray during the day. (28th.)—A disturbed night; but woke with "My grace is sufficient for thee" on my lips; hoped it was an answer to prayer. Slept again, and woke with the same text. Rose encouraged. . . . . This evening, went on with my remarks on the sons of Eli and the Rechabites. Read Carne's "Letters from the East," which, though not new to me, were most pleasing. So absorbed with his accounts of the Holy Land, I could scarcely quit them to go to bed."

A few days after the last entry (on the 6th of February) Mrs. Opie proceeded to Marazion, and carried out her purpose of visiting Mount St. Michael. The ascent she found "very steep," and was "surprised at the difficulty and pain of the effort;" but the "novelty of the situation" charmed her, and she stayed two days and nights, instead of one, as she had purposed. The accompanying letter graphically depicts the scene she witnessed, and her feelings on the occasion.

* In one of Mrs. O.'s notes, she writes, "Of all the books I ever read, Newton's Cardiphonia (the Bible excepted) did me the most good."

"*To Thos. Brightwell, Norwich.*

"*Regent Terrace, Penzance,*

"*2nd mo., 11th,* 1833. *Evening.*

"My dear Friend,—If I were now at my dear old house at Norwich, I should, perhaps, have the pleasure of passing this evening with thee; but as we are separated by a distance of nearly 400 miles, this pleasure I cannot have. I am, therefore, desirous to make myself amends for a privation which I frequently regret, by holding with thee that communication, imperfect though it be, which I *can* enjoy through the medium of pen, ink, and paper. * * * *

"One of the most interesting sights I have seen is The Pit, where Wesley, almost at the hazard of his life, addressed the Cornish men for the first time. It is now an immense punchbowl of green turf, cut into circular steps, from the top to the bottom; steps left to ascend and descend, dividing the area into four parts. At the top of the last one are two posts of granite, on which, when any one preaches, there is laid a board, to support whatever the preacher may require. On every Whit-Sunday, one of their most distinguished ministers holds forth to an immense congregation—immense indeed! for the place holds above ten thousand persons, and it is often quite full. I could fancy, as I stood there, those ten thousand of uplifted faces,

rapt in devout attention, and, as I hope, drinking in water from the well of salvation.

"The greatest sight, and, perhaps, one of the most unique in Europe, is St. Michael's Mount, as it is stupidly called, for the term *mount* gives one no idea of vastness, but the contrary; and who would expect to find a place called a mount—a rock, a mountain, and a castle? Yet, such is St. Michael's Mount, one of the seats of Sir John St. Aubyn; where I passed two days and two nights, *alone*, last week; and where I had leave to stay as long as I liked; but I felt a scruple against taking possession of a man's house in his absence, and putting his housekeeper to the trouble of waiting upon me, and cooking for me. She said she wished me to stay a week; but I thought she would, in her heart, be very glad to get rid of a crazy old gentlewoman, who came to look at the moon from the ramparts of the castle, as if she had no moon in her own country; and I don't doubt but she fancied me moonstruck, which idea was, I daresay, confirmed, by her catching me drawing the faces and figures I saw in the fire—a new, but, I assure thee, a very amusing occupation. I advise Lucy to set about it directly.

"The sea is closed round this magnificent mountain, with its masses of rock frowning midway down its verdant sides, during the greater part of the day; and such a sea as it is in winter! They are shipless waters, for no vessel could live in

them; and I did enjoy to see the waves of the Atlantic rolling proudly on one side of the castle, telling of greater and more fearful power beyond, where my eye could not penetrate. The first night I was there the weather was so rough, that I went to bed, supposing the moon would not shine. But when the tide *unclosed,* (as the saying is,) the moon shone, and I, on awaking past midnight, saw her light, but could not see her. So the next night I sat up till she rose, and leaning on the balcony, witnessed her fight with the wind and rain, and her ultimate victory. Such was the roughness of the sea, that the white foam made the 'darkness light about it' without the aid of the moon; but where she did not shine on their jutting points, dark as Erebus were the turrets, the ramparts, and the walls of the castle; while the little town at the foot of the mountain, and the more distant town beyond, lay in a sort of half tint of moonshine; and the noble rocks over which I leaned, were softened into beauty by the mellowing rays that rested on them. It was interesting to watch the lights from the habitations, far and near, as they gradually disappeared; and to feel that I, probably, was the only being awake and moving in that vast space of land and water. I walked, and gazed, and leaned upon the ramparts, till the consciousness of my solitude became oppressive to me, and I hastened along the corridor, so often trodden in times long past by the monk or the warrior, to my repose.

"This castle was once a monastery, and I entered a dungeon, which was found, a few years ago, bricked up, with the skeleton of a large man in it, no doubt that of an offending monk, left there to die by inches. Mont St. Michel, in Normandy, is the counterpart of this; but, though the castle is larger, the rock is only half as high. Both are conical, and so like in shape and external appearance, that the coloured drawings of the Norman castle I took for those of the English one. I have seen pictures of the Mount by my husband, but *no* painting can do it justice in detail; those masses of granite must be seen to be conceived of.

"It is five months and three weeks to-day since I left Norwich; and eventful months, indeed, they have been to my friends there, and the city in general. . . . . I can say, with thankfulness, that my spirits have been so high since I have been in this lovely county, that the misfortunes of those amongst whom I have been living were necessary to sober me a little; and death has been busy here, especially among children.

"I have been reading Newton's Cardiphonia. I am now reading the Prophets, in Adam Clarke's Bible. What a loss he must be to the religious world!

"Well! by this time, I daresay thou art as much tired of me as the housekeeper was, and art tempted to think her opinion of me a just one. I intend to be in Norfolk in the 6th month; no

house vacant for me, I suppose; nor do I intend to settle yet; I have Devonshire to see, and the north to revisit. I remain here probably till the 25th, when I return to Falmouth. Farewell. With affectionate remembrance to thy belongings,

"I am thy attached friend,

"A. Opie."

"2nd mo., 10th.—A day of storm and rain; but my dear friends came, and we went to meeting, which was still and solemn. (2nd mo., 11th.)—Rose low; read St. John's Gospel, as well as a psalm; wrote letters. A. C. called, and stayed some time; very agreeable. Evening pleasant, but in my heart I felt sad and self-judged. To bed sorrowing for my sinfulness.

"(1st day.)—A good night, but dared not go to meeting. Rain again! 'The rain it raineth every day.' Read some notes of Matt. Henry's Psalms, and Job; copied his note on the Rechabites; read to Mary, then to bed calm and encouraged.

"(2nd day.)—Went to the workhouse and jail. Found one of the committee there, who was very civil, and, with the governor, went about with me. The workhouse well conducted and comfortable. Mad patients there also. Saw one poor woman. In the prison not *one* person, but a woman debtor; going out soon. Gave 5*s.* to the fund, and 2*s.* 6*d.* to the poor woman. They promised to send me

an account of the average expense of the establishment per week, to the fund collected by poor's-rates; he thinks it not more than 2*s.* and a few pence each person. This gentleman called to tell me that what I had given, with a little added, would give the poor people a treat of cake and tea at five, next fourth day, and asked me to go and see them enjoy it. It was kindly meant, but I should think it ostentatious. . . . . Went to the shore to see the Mount by moonlight. I saw that poor young Irishman, A——, at No. 1, walking to-day, and I met him. He looks thinner and weaker, but his colour grows more and more brilliant. How I wish I dare speak to him, and ask him how he does. He comes from the north of Ireland. It is a comfort his brother is with him. (22nd.)—My last day at Penzance. I felt quitting a spot so endeared to me by hours of refreshing, and, I trust, beneficial solitude. A pleasing note from poor young B. A., (the lame invalid I saw daily from my window,) returning my books, and regretting my departure.*

* He afterwards corresponded with Mrs. O., on religious subjects, and she lent him books, and wrote, giving him Christian advice and instruction. He eventually died in Cornwall; and there is reason to believe that her efforts were not in vain, and that she was instrumental in leading him to the only "hiding place from the wind, and covert from the tempest." "I shall always believe (she afterwards said) that I was *constrained* to speak to him, and offer him books, before I had even learned his name, by a power higher than myself, and who, to effect any important purpose, deigns to make use even of a weak and unworthy instrument."

Mrs. Opie returned from Penzance to Falmouth, where she remained some weeks, visiting her friends, and enjoying their warm-hearted hospitality and kindness. She makes daily entries in her journal, and details the domestic every-day life, and the occasional fêtes or troubles of her friends. Especially she dwells, with evident delight and cordial satisfaction, on the religious communion and true sympathy of spirit in divine things, which she enjoyed in such congenial society. At length, on the 29th of April she writes:—

"Alas! the day of my departure from dear Cornwall—therefore unwelcome. I bade a reluctant adieu to all my dear Cornish friends, deeply thankful for the happiness I have enjoyed during seven months' stay in this charming country, and with this interesting family and others; and endeavouring to prepare mentally for other scenes and other persons."

She spent a few days with friends at Combe, on her way to Bristol, where she arrived on the 4th instant, and closes her diary shortly after, with these words:—

"Here ends my journal of my Cornish visit (and its appendix at Combe), for the health, safety, benefit, and enjoyment of which, I feel deep thankfulness to the Giver of all good."

I cannot forbear, in closing this chapter, to quote a few lines, in which Mrs. Opie has, I think, beautifully painted the scene of her midnight watch

on St. Michael's Mount, described in the letter to Mr. Brightwell. These lines are taken from her four "Sketches of St. Michael's Mount," appended to the volume of her "Lays for the Dead."

The time was midnight; and the wintry wind
Howl'd o'er the bosom of the foaming deep,
Which to its voice in louder war replied,
When, on the ramparts of that castled rock,
Sea-girt, which bears the great archangel's name,
I held my lonely watch—and held it, awestruck.

* * * * * *

But happier thoughts stole on me, as the wind
Ceased its wild roar—and round the castle's walls
I took my solitary walk, and hoped
The dark Atlantic heaved with gentler swell
Its mighty billows—while the eastern waves
Began to wear a soft and pallid hue,
As yet the source unseen—that unseen source
The cause that led me to my midnight watch
On that tall rock, braving the driving storm;
For I was come to see the beauteous moon
In cloudless majesty her state assume.
But I was forced to wait upon her smile
As courtiers watch the smile of earthly queen,
And long I waited on the battlements
With folded arms; with pensive eye
Marking the scene below, wide, billowy, dark,
Save where, from lowly cottages, which lay
Scatter'd around the mountain's foot below,
And from the dwellings on the distant shores,
As yet, some lights put forth faint twinkling rays.
But, when the distant clock, upon the wind
Gave solemn notice of the midnight hour,
Lo! one by one I saw those welcome lights
Fade from the view, till not a single beam
Was left to tell, that in the dark expanse

And near that wilderness of waters then
Another eye than mine a vigil kept;
But *I, alone*, seem'd waking.—Thus, methought,
As life advances, one by one, we mark
Our dearest friends and relatives expire.
No eye of love remains to cheer our age,
And we are left alone.

CHAPTER V.

After her lengthened absence, which was extended to the month of July, 1833, Mrs. Opie, returning to Norwich, established herself in lodgings in St. Giles'-street. Immediately after, we find her resuming the daily entries in her notebook; but they were soon discontinued, evidently in consequence of her frequent visits and short absences from home.

The journal commences: "(25th of 6th mo.) Arrived at 70, St. Giles'-street; breakfasted, and went to bed; thankful for my safe arrival, and also that I did not feel *not* coming to my own house and servants. At three, P.M., arose, and went to call on my aunt, and other friends. Then to the burying-ground; found my dear father's grave well done, and the 'forget-me-not' on it, in full bloom; thankful for that.* On my way homeward, I was

* Mrs. O., in one of her letters written after visiting Père la Chaise, said, "I envy the power of planting flowers on the graves of those we love." She appears to have indulged this feeling as long as she lived, in having Dr. Alderson's grave carefully preserved from weeds, etc., and she paid an annual sum to have it kept, and flowers planted round it. The "forget-me-not" was a favourite with Dr. A., and she endeavoured to naturalize it, but in vain, the soil and air being inimical to its growth.

kindly greeted by some poor people I met, and welcomed back. I must call on poor Lizzy's parents as soon as I can, her death *me tient au cœur*. I know she was well cared for in temporals; but more I know not. (3rd day.) Having dined, I went out at seven; took tea at my own dear ci-devant house, and saw the improvements. It is now perfect. Went home by the A.'s, and learned there the death of poor T. S. How thankful I am that before I went away I put her under the care of friends; so that I know all was done for her that she needed. She was a truly pious Methodist, and needed not the preparation of a deathbed, I believe, to fit her to meet the Lord.

"(1st day, 29th.) Rose, after a restless night. Meeting at the Gildencroft; felt favoured and encouraged. Went with S. Mackie to visit the graves: forbade the culture of that yellow flower (name unknown to me) on them, in future. After dinner, called on A. B. Surprised and pleased to find her so well in body. Her mind is always well. *He* is the great Physician of souls. My room north, and cold; I have a fire. Read again Matt. Henry's life. (2nd day, 30th.) H. Girdlestone called. Went to see poor —— at her desire; she thought I should do her good. I did my best, having asked Divine assistance. Sent her Wesley's hymns for all states, and a tractate on self-resignation. What a dreadful feeling for any one to feel themselves spiritually deserted, and unable to pray! But then

the case is one of physical as well as moral disease. May I be permitted to do her good, by leading her to throw herself wholly upon her Saviour! Called on my dear old friends, the Rogers'—(3rd day, 1st of mo.)—Went to the Infant School, called on various friends, and went to tea at the Martineaus'. (5th day, 3rd.) Came to the Grove for a week." . .

After remaining a few days at the Grove, Mrs. Opie went to Earlham, where she enjoyed the great pleasure of meeting Dr. Chalmers, who was then on a visit to Mr. J. J. Gurney. In his journal (given in his Memoirs) Dr. C. has made very pleasant mention of this occurrence. After noticing various incidents that had impressed him, he writes :—

"Friday, July 26th. . . . . Lastly, I must mention a lady who dined, and spent the night—one who, in early life, was one of the most distinguished of our literary women; whose works, thirty years ago, I read with great delight—no less a person than the celebrated Mrs. Opie, authoress of the most exquisite feminine tales, and for which I used to place her by the side of Miss Edgeworth. It was curious to myself, that, though told by Mr. Gurney, in the morning, of her being to dine, I had forgotten the circumstance; and the idea of the accomplished novelist and poet was never once suggested by the image of this plain-looking Quakeress; till it rushed upon me, after

dinner, when it suddenly and inconceivably augmented the interest I felt in her. We had much conversation and drew greatly together, walking and talking with each other on the beautiful lawn, after dinner. She has had access into all kinds of society, and her conversation is all the more rich and interesting. I complained to her of one thing in Quakerism, and that is their mode of introductions; that I could have recognised in *Mrs. Opie* an acquaintance of thirty years' standing, but that I did not, and could not feel the charm of any such reminiscence, when *Joseph John* simply bade me lead out *Amelia* from his drawing-room to his dining-room. I felt, however, my new acquaintance with this said Amelia to be one of the great acquisitions of my present journey; and this union of rank, opulence, literature, and polish of mind, with plainness of manners, forms one of the great charms of society in this house. We had much and cordial talk all the evening, a family exposition before supper; and at length, a general breaking-up, somewhere about eleven o'clock, terminated this day, at once of delightful recreation and needful repose. Saturday, July 27th.—Mrs. Opie left us early, and we parted from each other most cordially."

Mrs. Opie was much gratified with this meeting, and afterwards addressed these

LINES TO DR. CHALMERS,

On reading his description of Dr. Brown, in his Chapter on the Connexion between the Intellect and the Will.

When Eve, (by Milton's magic muse portrayed)
In the clear stream her new-born self survey'd,
Surprised she gazed, with admiration fired,
Nor knew *she* was the being she admired;
And, while describing what had charm'd her view,
Suspected not she her own portrait drew.
Chalmers, however strange the thought may be,
To our first mother I resemble *thee*.
In what, with all thy generous warmth of praise,
Thy pen lamented Brown's vast powers displays;—
Paints him, diffusing Fancy's genial hue
O'er the cold paths philosophers pursue,
Intent to bid, round Reason's thoughtful brow,
Imagination's varying garlands glow,
Till "Intellectual Power" attention lends,
And from its "awful throne" soft "smiling bends;"—
Paints him, on mind's most arduous summit placed,
The scene still decking with the flowers of taste,
As if call'd forth by wand of fairy elf:—
Then trust me, Chalmers, thou describ'st *thyself;*
And all the charms which in Brown's picture shine,
By thy unconscious hand portray'd, are *thine*.

The letter that follows, written about two months later, gives us some account of the manner in which the intervening weeks were passed.

"*To D. F. Tottenham.*

"10*th mo.*, 10*th*, 1833.

"My very dear Friend,

". . . I returned home in full feather; but just now the illness of one of my old servants

confines me, and I cannot go out till she is better, or all is over. This (her illness) is to me a little sorrow. I have passed a very pleasant autumn. I was at Bradfield House, near Woodbridge, for ten days: but alas! to go there, I made such a sacrifice; and had I not been engaged to go, I must have remained at Earlham, for there I left Dr. Chalmers. Such a companion! Such a man! However, I had a long *tête-à-tête* with him, and made the most of my time. Such simplicity, with such true Christian humility, I never saw before, united to such genius and learning.

"I was ten days, previously, at the Grove. Since then I have been to Runcton, and at Earlham, to meet the Bishop of W.'s wife and family; who (especially the bishop) are uncommon and delightful persons. Also, at Lowestoft, staying with the Judge (Alderson), and since then at Northrepps Cottage, which I left with great regret. It is such a treat to me to be with them, and I have promised to return thither on the 12th of 1st mo.

"Since my return from them, I have been staying with H. T., the highly gifted and learned man who is so kind as to be my chief critic. I have been over my Book of Lays twice with him; and I trust that, in a month or two, I shall be in the press. I have been about this little volume twenty years;—still, it is with trembling that I shall give it to the public; though many whom I esteem good judges, and even severe critics, are very encouraging.

". . . . In the case of that dear friend whom we have recently lost, I see another proof that the Lord's choicest ones are thus tried for the good of others, and of his church militant on earth,—to show, not only a bright example, but to prove how sufficiently potent to make the tortured rise superior to physical suffering, is the hope that is in Christ Jesus. . . . . Dear friend, I must conclude.

"Thy ever attached

"A. Opie."

The "Lays for the Dead" did, as their authoress anticipated, make their appearance "in print," very shortly after the date of this letter. Among them are many which have reference to friends and events connected with the history of her life through successive years; and some are very touching tributes to the memory of those whom she had loved, and lost. This little volume was the last connected work she ever published: the number of pieces it contains is fifty, including the "Sketches of St. Michael's Mount, inscribed to Lord de Dunstanville and Sir John St. Aubyn, with which it concludes.

Six of the Lays are inscribed, "On the Portraits of Deceased Relatives and Friends which hang around me." These portraits, as I have said, she retained in her possession, and cherished as her choicest treasures. Gazing on them, she seemed

to find consolation; and when she penned her "Lays of Death," it was fitting they should wake her lyre's fondest and saddest chord. Thus she apostrophizes them:—

> . . . "I am left
> Alone on the earth. Yet, not alone while thus
> My solitude is peopled. Precious art!
> I am alone: the fireside vacant now,
> Once fill'd so happily. But when I gaze
> On you, art's fair creations, I no more
> Seem desolate and left; for fancy, fired
> While gazing on you, o'er the present throws
> The bright, heart-warming radiance of the past."

These pictures are so associated in my mind with all my recollections of her, from seeing them constantly in the rooms she inhabited, and from hearing her so frequently speak of them and point attention to them, that I cannot resist the wish I feel to make my readers acquainted with them, and especially as they will thus learn some interesting particulars respecting the early history and friends of Mrs. Opie.

"PORTRAIT THE FIRST" was "Augustine Briggs, M.P. for Norwich, who lived in the days of Charles the First, and left as an heir-loom, a long sword with a label, in his own handwriting, tied to it," purporting that it was worn "in the service of the royal martyr." Honourable mention is made of him in Blomfield's History of Norfolk, and he was a public benefactor to his native city, which still enjoys the benefit of his generous bequests.

He was Mrs. Opie's "great, great, *great* grandfather," and she was evidently not a little proud of him; she addresses him as her

> ". . . . honour'd ancestor,
> Who for his sovereign drew the loyal sword,
> Yet civic chain, well earn'd by civic worth,
> Respected bore. In childhood's earliest days
> That picture was my conscience. I delight
> To gaze upon it still, bound in thy spell,
> Association! of the moral world
> The unfading ivy."

"PORTRAIT THE SECOND" was the subject of one of Mrs. Opie's first-published lays, written the year after her marriage, and addressed to her husband, "on his having painted for (her) the picture of Mrs. Twiss." The concluding lines contained a pleasing tribute of affection to him whose "gift of bridal love" it was, and a soft sweet breath of love pervades the later verses given in the series.

"PORTRAIT THE THIRD" was one of the most admirable, artistically speaking, and for the personage it depicted Mrs. Opie entertained a most affectionate respect, dating from the days of her girlhood. He was her "dear friend and French master, John Bruckner," a Flemish clergyman, who resided in Norwich for fifty-one years, during which period he officiated as pastor of the Walloon and Dutch churches in that city.

He was a proficient in the French language, and

for many years gave lessons in it, and Mrs. Opie was one of his pupils. To this amiable and accomplished man she was also indebted for much general information, which he was well qualified to impart. Mr. Opie's picture of him was painted at her request, and was an excellent likeness, as well as an admirable work of art.

"THE FOURTH PORTRAIT" was that of Dr. Alderson. It was a profile view of his face, and considered a fine likeness. His daughter, in the verses she has devoted to this picture, dwells on the latter period of his life, and expresses her deep thankfulness for the bright hopes that shone on his declining days, and illumined the dark valley of the shadow of death.

"THE FIFTH PORTRAIT" in the series represented Mr. Ollyett Woodhouse, the much-loved cousin of Mrs. Opie. She styled him her "gay childhood's darling, the beloved companion of (her) youth," and ever entertained for him the warmest affection. He went to India, and found an untimely grave on "the distant shore of Malabar." There are other verses, in this volume, addressed to him, and frequent allusions to him are scattered about in her letters and diaries. Well do I recollect the burst of feeling with which she reproved me, for having once made some disparaging remarks upon this portrait. What possessed me I know not; I was young and unthinking, and I was not aware that it was the likeness of one

dear to her. Alarmed and distressed, I begged her forgiveness, and soon I received it in the following note, which I preserved; and some of its remarks are so excellent that I think it deserves to find a place here. It is dated

"1*st mo.*, 30, 1835.

"My dear Lucy,—I thank thee for thy note, and can, *en toute sûreté de conscience*, reply, that I most sincerely excuse the fault alluded to; but it went on growing so comically. Last came thy dislike of the countenance of one whom I loved better than any being I ever knew, except my father; he was my first cousin, and the most loveable of human beings. But I always am more inclined to pity, than to blame, the fastidious—those who are not easily pleased; for a power of being easily pleased I look upon as one of the surest sources of happiness; and for that power in myself, I every day, almost, thank my Creator.

"Nothing ever prejudices me more in favour of any one, than the prompt and candid avowal of an error. Little dear! does not the cap fit?

"Farewell, in love,

"A. Opie."

"Portrait the sixth," the subject of the last of the Lays, is that of her husband. This

picture represented the painter, with his brush and easel in hand, looking towards the spectator. It seemed impossible, as you looked at it, to doubt that it presented a faithful portraiture of him. In compliance with Mrs. Opie's wish, it was sent, after her decease, to Mr. Opie's native place, Truro, to be placed in the public hall of that town.

When this volume, so full of affecting memories, that had so long engaged her thought and care, was at length completed and given to the world, its writer pensively recorded her feelings in these words: . . . . "I have humbly endeavoured to school my mind against the trial of its failure by meditation and prayer. I feel that it must appear sadly monotonous: the St. Michael's Mount Lays are less gloomy, but all are tinged; yet I hope that it will touch a chord in the hearts of some of my readers."

During the autumn and winter of this year, Mrs. Opie's health was considerably impaired. She already began to suffer from attacks of the disorder which afflicted her throughout the remainder of her life. She walked lame, and was under medical treatment; but still her spirits were buoyant, and she wrote: "I am full of hope. It is, after all, no bad thing for any of us to feel the time for positive preparation come. Life ought, indeed, to be a constant preparation for death; but few make it so, and I feel that I have not so

done. . . . . I love home better than any other place, and also solitude; which is, considering my lone condition, a mercy. This winter has been one of much physical trial; but I believe I can say, without affectation, it has been one of the happiest and most beneficial of my life."*

In the spring of 1834, she went to London, and consulted Sir B. Brodie, who gave it as his opinion that there was no radical disease. This was a great relief to her; although she still suffered from pain, her mind was "relieved of its burden;" and she decided upon carrying out an intention she had long entertained, of visiting Scotland. Many years had passed since she was there; and she

* The following extract, from a letter written in November of this year, will interest the reader:—

"11*th mo.*, 1, 1833.

"Thou wilt have heard of dear S. H., jun.'s merciful release from his bodily sufferings, and also that 'Lord, I am thine!' were probably his *last* words. What an instructive lesson, both to young and old, has the whole scene been! The manner in which he was enabled to bear his trial, (and what a trial! giving up every tie and everything that makes life valuable,) is a proof of what importance it is for parents to give their children early habits of piety and a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. One may say of L. and her husband, that they had indeed educated a child for heaven. And, another proof of what advantage it is to a young man to choose for his wife a girl who had been piously brought up, this sweet young widow was able to meet her poor husband's mind on every point, to contemplate with him the dark valley before him, and to rejoice with him in the sustaining rod and staff. She was, indeed, his earthly helper in his time of need."

much desired to see again the country for which, from her earliest days, she had indulged the warmest prepossession, and also to get a glimpse of the Highlands. The month of August found her on her way; on the 9th inst. she went on board the "Monarch" steamer; and her journal gives an amusing account of the scene she witnessed when she awoke during the night, and of the inconveniences of the crowded vessel. The next day was the sabbath, and divine service was performed by a clergyman on board. "Afterwards," she writes, "I read some psalms, and have been in spirit with my afflicted friends, the Candlers, at their mother's interment, and have thought of them and other friends there; I hope, too, I have been thought of and remembered before the throne of grace."

On arriving at Edinburgh, our traveller thus records her feelings: "Deeply thankful do I feel for the mercy that has hitherto attended and watched over me. Oh that beautiful and sublime castle and rock, on which I gaze from my sitting-room window! how I delight to see them again!"

Having rested for two or three days, she proceeded to Aberdeen, for the purpose of attending a general meeting of Friends there. The journey thither was delightful, "the skies blue, the waters calm, the hills fine, and the corn golden." The Firth of Tay strongly reminded one of her fellow-

travellers, who had lived many years in India, of the mighty Ganges. From Aberdeen Mrs. Opie proceeded to Stonehaven, and in her note-book she thus describes an excursion she made in its neighbourhood:—

. . . "From Stonehaven I walked to Ury—a lovely place. Afterwards, my companion took me in a boat to see the ruins of Dunnottar Castle. We sailed past it, and went out to sea, in order to view a most magnificent ridge of rocks, where the sea-fowl live. I was rapt in a sort of devout astonishment at the size and height of the rocks—the highest on the coast—and pleased with the novel sight of the countless sea-anemones, just under the waves, like a varied flower-garden, pink, lilac, purple, white, yellow, orange, and variegated. Nor was the sound of the birds, as they winged their flight over our heads, without its appropriate charm in such a scene. . . . I was too tired to visit the castle that day, but the next we drove there; the ruins are grand and vast, and the rock, of which they form a part, sublime."

Returning to Aberdeen, she started again by the 'Highlander" coach for Braemar. She speaks with ecstasy of the drive beside the Dee. "Words *can't* do any justice to the magnificence of the scene. The Grampians and 'their dark Lognegan,' sung by Lord Byron, defy description. . . . The most remarkable objects were the immense rocks and mountains around. Oh! it was at times

a fearful pass. The road wound round the edge of a precipice, spirally; and there was (at least in the worst part) no fence. They were, however, so sublime, that I was sorry to part with them for tamer scenery. The Spittal of Glenshee is a desolate, wild, savage-looking place indeed; nothing could possibly make me like to abide there, except the wish to do good to some one."

The journal goes on to describe her progress to Blair Gowrie and Dunkeld, at which place the Grampians "exchanged their bare grandeur for a robe of verdure, feathering them up to the top." She next visited the good town of Perth, and was pleased to find in her landlady a Norfolk woman, who expressed herself glad to see one who was welcome both for her own and her country's sake. The following day Mrs. Opie went, in a gig, to see Scone. Of the Old Palace she found no vestige remaining, save one doorway; but the furniture being all transferred to the new one, she says, "I saw there a bed and a screen worked by poor Mary, when a prisoner at Lochleven, and her odious son's bed, etc." The sight-seeing of the day was completed by a visit to Kinfauns, "a beautiful place built of white granite; from the terrace and the windows grand wooded rocks are to be seen, and the Tay glides through the vale beneath." Here was the sword of Wallace, "which," she says, "I lifted with great difficulty." Unfortunately, at this point of her journey, Mrs. Opie became

really ill. She went in an open carriage to Crieff, and got wet through; the consequence of this imprudent act was a violent cold, succeeded by fever and much suffering. Happily, some benevolent strangers—Dr. (now Sir J.) Richardson, the well-known Arctic traveller, and his lady—came to her assistance, and rendered her all necessary succour.

Returning to Edinburgh, she remained there about three weeks, enjoying much the company of numerous friends, pleasing visits in the neighbourhood, interviews with Dr. Chalmers, and many agreeable incidents which are recorded in her journal. On the 22nd of September she commenced her proposed journey into the Highlands. A few extracts from her letters and notes will enable the reader to follow her steps.

". . . . On the 22nd of September, I left Edinburgh for Glasgow. I dined at the house of Sir W. Hooker. Next morning I set off by steam-boat, along the Clyde to Dumbarton; from thence I went by coach to Loch Lomond. How glad was I to find myself, at last, gliding up that lake full of islands. One of these is appropriated to the use of harmless insane people, who are permitted to wander about it at will. Had I known this at the time, my interest would have been greatly enhanced. . . The afternoon was lovely; the sky was blue, and the clouds floated in silvery brightness above the mountains, and even the lofty head of Ben Lomond

was unveiled. As I gazed upon his grandeur, and listened to the gentle ripplings of the waters of the lake as they broke against the shore, I felt a soothing calm and a devotional enjoyment. When a girl, I had delighted to read 'Gilpin on Picturesque Scenery,' and particularly had admired the coloured print of the Castle of Inverary, with the sun setting behind it; and now I had come to see it! How busy was my memory, as we rowed over the clear and lovely waters, skirting the proud domains of the house of Argyle!

". . . . The morrow came, and what a lovely scene did I gaze upon when I entered my sitting-room! The sea was so smooth that the vessels on it, though all the sails were up, appeared quite motionless. The top of Mull was cloudless; but the mists of night were slowly and gracefully unwinding themselves from the verdant sides of Morven; and I was indeed gazing on the Western Isles, so often imaged to my fancy, and so full to me of Ossian and poetical associations. But regret mingled with my pleasure, as I knew that I was come too late in the year to visit Staffa and Iona. Still it was a satisfaction to look at them, and I could not long keep away from the window.

"As we steamed past 'rocky Morven,' it was clothed in lights, shadows, and tints, which no pencil could paint nor pen describe. I gazed, almost spell-bound, as I floated by. There was an unearthly hue over the western side of the scene,

which would soon have assisted the fancy to trace on it the forms of the heroes of Ossian. The declining sun, while scattering over surrounding objects the brightest hues, threw at the same time over the Western Isles and their lofty boundary of rocks, a mysterious, faintly coloured mantle of ever-vanishing yet ever-renewed vapour. The rippling waves were bright with gold and silver; the black shadows of the rocks of Morven were reflected in the glassy bosom of the sea; and the magic colouring of the western vales, mountains, and waters, rendered me insensible to the attractions of the eastern shore, till there was pointed out to me the land of Selma and of song."

The notes of this journal are closed with the following lines:—"How congenial to the Highlands are solitude and silence! We may deplore the present desolateness and depopulation of those most interesting scenes, but they certainly increase their beauty and solemnity. I always admire the ocean most when there are no vessels whatever on its waves; and the solitude, stillness, and depopulation of the Highlands were, to me, heighteners of their charms."

Mrs. Opie afterwards visited Abbotsford. "I will see," she said to herself, "the wonderful man's house in life, and his house in death;" and so, "at six o'clock on a misty wintry morning," she set off for Melrose, from whence she took a post-chaise and drove to Abbotsford. Eighteen years

had passed since first she crossed the Tweed. At that time Abbotsford was not in existence; nor did she see Sir Walter when she visited Edinburgh in 1816. He did not chance to be there, and she was obliged to content herself with gazing on Raeburn's lifelike picture of him, the property of Constable, whose guest she was. She had seen him, indeed, a few months previously, at the house of Sir George Phillips; and her admiration of him caused her to delight in recalling the pleasure of that meeting. "Eagerly did I tell everybody who would listen to me," she said, "of the impression he had made on me; but I was mortified when, on my praising the beauty of his countenance, under strong excitement, and the fire of his blue-grey eye, Dr. Brown, the celebrated professor, interrupted me with, 'Nay, nay, Mrs. Opie, do not go on with these flights of fancy; the face is nothing but a roast-beef and plum-pudding face, say what you will.' Whatever that face was, would I had had the pleasure of seeing it again! The remembrance of the enjoyment the morning I passed with him at Mount-street gave me, I treasure as one of the greatest which was ever afforded me by worldly intercourse."

That pleasure she never enjoyed again. Very different were the feelings she has depicted in her account of the visit she paid to his deserted mansion and to his grave. "It was with considerable

emotion that I beheld the gates of Abbotsford, that far-famed, but now untenanted house; but the mind of Sir W. Scott seemed yet to pervade everything around. All the objects, all the furniture, spoke of and realized, as it were, the creations of his pen; nay, evidently had helped to create them. It was action and reaction. He began to write with warlike weapons and things of 'auld lang syne' about him, and these stores accumulating, impressed themselves powerfully on his imagination; and his imagination, in turn, stamped them upon his paper, till his pages resembled his rooms, and his rooms resembled his pages. How much was I interested in examining the varied curiosities which the rooms contained—the beauty of the apartments themselves, the pictures, the gate of the Tolbooth and its massy keys—the silver vase, the gift of Lord Byron, containing the ashes of the Greeks, found under the walls of the Acropolis, and the various other objects around me!

"But the sight of all these things did not tend to elevate my spirits, and I quitted the place with feelings suited to a scene more melancholy still. . . . . The fatigue of my journey from Edinburgh had disposed me to sleep, but I was aroused from my slumbers by a strange sensation, like that produced by the motion of a steam-vessel. We were fording the Tweed, and going against a very strong current; and, in spite of my admiration of that river, I did not relish the idea of

being drowned, even in its classic waters; not that there was any real danger, but the tide rolled darkly and powerfully along, and I was tired and depressed.

"I soon found a guide to the ruins (Dryburgh Abbey), and followed her along a narrow path, covered with fallen leaves, the emblems of decay—a fitting carpet for the road to the abode of death, which now met my view in unmitigated dreariness; for, though the carved roof of the crypt remained entire in its beauty, the sides of the ruin were open to every wind that blew. The graves of Sir Walter and Lady Scott, raised several feet from the ground, were placed beneath the arch of the building, and therefore, in a degree sheltered from the weather. But not one blade of grass grew on those graves of clay; and, giving the unconscious dead my own feelings, I was weak enough to wish, while the rain fell and the wind whistled around, that their last dwelling had been warmed, at least, by a covering of vegetation. To my judgment, this seemed, indeed, an idle desire; but feeling, or rather, perhaps, folly, was predominant. It was with many affecting associations that I gazed on the grave nearest me, that of Sir Walter; and some minutes elapsed before I could prevail on myself to quit the spot, and go to the burying-ground of Lord and Lady Buchan, where I experienced an absurd feeling of satisfaction in finding that their remains were deposited under stones of memorial, and in a

building covered in from the weather. But the sight of those tombs did not call forth in me either regret or emotion. Their inhabitants had died at a good old age, surviving even the usual term of man's existence; but their far-famed neighbour in the abode of death had fallen a victim to premature decay." . . . .

A short extract from a letter, written by Mrs. Opie when at Edinburgh, shows her state of feeling as she reviewed this journey. She writes: "My tour, beloved friend, has been a sort of epitome of human life. I have been now in heights, now in depths; now it has been sunshine, and now dark clouds; smooth waters and rough ones; now I have been well, now ill; now driving through vales and over mountains, free as the denizens of the air; and now confined to my own room, a sufferer and a prisoner. But, through all these vicissitudes, I have to acknowledge, with deep thankfulness, that I have been 'kept in perfect peace;' and, were I to name one part of my life as more uninterruptedly cheerful than another, I could, with truth, name the period of my Highland wanderings, and of my visit to Scotland." . . .

CHAPTER VI.

In 1835, Mrs. Opie again visited the continent. As on former occasions, she kept a daily journal, which was written in very fine characters, and in pencil. Her route was directed through Bruges and Ghent, to Brussels, where she was to join a friend, with whom she purposed making a trip up the Rhine. This journal commences: "On board the Lord Liverpool packet for Ostend, the 25th of the 7th mo., 1835. . . . . What a lesson for human pride, and what a leveller, is a steam-boat! Lords, ladies, nurses, ladies' maids, Quakers, and Catholics, believers, and probably infidels, all levelled by sea-sickness, and alike bowing to a conscious sense of human infirmity; and some, I trust, with feelings of profound submission to the humiliation inflicted by a higher Power." . . .

It was indeed a tedious and disagreeable passage. The vessel was crowded, and the wind blew contrary the whole time. Glad was our traveller to reach the shore early next morning; and, after a hasty breakfast, and a walk round the town, she proceeded to Bruges, and thence by the passage-boat to Ghent, where she visited the various cha-

ritable institutions of that city; among others, the lunatic asylums. In the one devoted to women, she was much pleased with the superintendent, who showed her over the establishment. Surprised at the number of the patients, Mrs. Opie observed, that they doubtless required many assistants. "Such is not the case," was the woman's reply; "we need no aid. I myself sleep every night alone with sixty or seventy of the women." The visitor observed, "Astonishing! but the great God knows and protects those who are his." "True," she answered; "we trust in him, and are protected." "As she said this," remarks Mrs. Opie, "I was forcibly reminded of the same sentiment, so sweetly expressed in the following lines:—

> "'Jesus protects,—my fears, begone.
> What can the Rock of ages move?
> Safe in his care I lay me down,
> Protected by a Father's love.'"

In the course of this conversation, Mrs. Opie learned that, among the unfortunate inmates, there was one of her countrywomen; and, on her requesting to see her, a pleasing-looking young woman was pointed out, whose appearance immediately fixed her attention. She learned that the poor creature had been there two years. She had been found in the streets of Ghent, where she had been deserted by her husband, an Englishman, who had literally left her to perish. The authorities had directed her to be taken to the asylum, where she

was sometimes, apparently, nearly well; but as she could neither speak nor understand French, the difficulty of treating her was great, and the physician had thought that the best chance for her recovery would be restoration to her friends and native country. For two years she had not attempted to speak; nor did she answer the inquiries which Mrs. Opie proceeded to address to her. "Touched with compassion, I eagerly sought," says Mrs. O., "the necessary information. I found the certificate of the birth and baptism of the poor girl, and, copying the document, I promised to do all in my power to restore the sufferer to her parents and her country."*

I do not propose to accompany Mrs. Opie in her

* This pledge was faithfully fulfilled. Mrs. Opie, at the end of three months, returned to Ghent, saw the chief physician of the establishment, obtained from him an admirable statement of the case, which she took with her to her friend, Dr. H., of London, who willingly undertook the task of getting the sufferer conveyed to England. The necessary expenses were provided by friends to whom Mrs. Opie had applied for aid; and in a short time the woman arrived safely at the Tower-stairs, where she was met by her father, who had come up from Southampton to receive back his long-lost child. He carried her with him to her native place, where, for a time, she seemed restored to reason; but afterwards the malady returned, and it was necessary to have her removed to an asylum. Painful as this result doubtless was, Mrs. Opie, nevertheless, expressed her satisfaction that she had been permitted to procure for the unhappy sufferer so great an alleviation as was afforded by her removal to her own country and friends.

visits to the numerous institutions, charitable and religious, which attracted her notice during the time of her sojourn in Ghent. She published a full account of her "Recollections in Belgium," in "Tait's Magazine" for 1840, and to this I refer the reader. From Ghent Mrs. Opie proceeded to Brussels, where she was to meet a lady, who had agreed to be her companion in making the tour of the Rhine. Madame M—— having arrived, the two ladies pursued their way to Antwerp. Mrs. Opie was much impressed with the celebrated picture by Rubens, of the "Descent from the Cross;" she exclaims, "What grand conception! What motion in all the figures! The scene, the subject, the sense of surpassing genius, and the living effect of everything, quite overcame me, even to tears."

Proceeding from Brussels to Namur, Huy, and Liège, on the 16th the travellers were at Spa, of which she speaks with admiration. "This is a lovely spot indeed; to me, how does it bring back my earliest recollections! Poor Amisant used to give me bon bons and toys from Spa, and tell me stories of it. We dined at the *table d'hôte*, forty persons present—good company. Next day, we went to see a famous cascade; the drive thither, through a deeply wooded ravine, was beautiful. On the 20th, we were to have seen a curious grotto, but could not get horses, on account of the odious

races. Well, money saved, and fatigue avoided. A hundred persons dined at the *table d'hôte*."

They left Spa for Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 21st, where, much against Mrs. Opie's will, they were obliged to remain five or six days. It happened to be the time of the races, which occasioned much turmoil and crowd; and the sight of the gambling constantly going forward in the "Salle de Redoute," a licensed gambling-room, fitted up in splendid style, caused her much painful feeling. The sabbath-breaking, too, shocked her, and it was doubly distressing to see our own countrymen willing to join in such profanation of that holy day, as they would be ashamed or afraid to practise at home.*

* I am reminded by this remark, of an excellent "Address to Travellers on the Continent, on the Observance of the Lord's Day," which appeared in the "Christian Observer" for 1833—from which I am tempted to give the reader a short quotation. "On that holy day, drinking and gaming, dancing, singing and theatrical amusements abound in France and elsewhere. I believe all travellers will confess this is no exaggerated account of the objects to which every Sunday is devoted throughout a considerable portion of the continent. From this vortex, it will become the Christian traveller to steer at a cautious distance; for it is hard to struggle against it, if carried by the current within the sphere of its attraction. When once we are committed, to a certain extent, in society, unforeseen circumstances—unintentional, or perhaps wilful, misapprehensions—the fear of giving offence—the silence of hesitation construed into that of assent—and many similar causes, draw us, even without the aid of inclination, far beyond our intended limits of concession. I do not speak this merely from general observation, but from a case directly in point. I happen to know, that a person who is in the habit of avoiding public society on a Sunday, from conscientious

She writes:—"(23rd, 8th mo.) . . Rose depressed. Sunday, no sabbath for me. This is an odious place. However, I enjoyed my quiet sitting at home, and was at Norwich meeting, with my dear and endeared brethren and sisters, in spirit. (24th.)—All noise, bustle and carriages, come in for the races. No one seems to think of anything but *les courses*. We have bitten all nations now with this vicious folly."

On the 28th, the travellers proceeded to Cologne, which they reached after "a pleasant drive," and hastened to see the cathedral, which is described in one word, "exquisite." Next day, the journal proceeds:—"My window looked on the river, and I rose at half-past four to gaze at the Rhine; the sun was just rising behind a church with fine towers, and the river reflected objects. No one seemed waking but myself. It was a still, sublime, and solemn moment. At seven we came on board the steamer, where I now write, the Rhine, broad and rapid, spreading around me. The banks are tame,

motives, having, when abroad, yielded this point once, on a particular occasion, was, in the end, so entangled by a train of unforeseen circumstances, as to find himself at the theatre in the evening with the rest of the party, to his own surprise and sorrow. A French writer confessed, that the sight of some Highlanders on their way to church, made him and his friends feel 'rather ashamed of their Sunday travelling.' Did English travellers uniformly abstain from such indulgences, it is possible that, in time, they might make their continental neighbours 'rather ashamed' of their Sunday opera, their Sunday theatre, and their Sunday *redoute*."

and fog hides the hills; but the voyage is truly pleasant, and then we are on the Rhine."

Here we will leave them to proceed along the "glorious Rhine in all its beauty," visiting all the points of interest so well known, and so often described by travellers. The month of September passed quickly away, and on the 1st of October they reached Friburg.

"From thence (the journal proceeds) we set off for Boldbach, *en route* to the Falls, and soon turning into a valley, went up, on foot, a very steep, narrow, rocky defile, the river rolling and talking beneath, the rocks and mountains so high, that in the carriage it was difficult to see to the top, the vale was so narrow. It was sublimely grand to look back, and so repeatedly did the road wind that it seemed as if we were blocked in by rocks. This was the Black Forest and the famous Gorge d'Enfer. The next thing worthy of equal admiration was the Black Forest itself, through which we passed, and the latter part of it we had the moon to light us through. Before we reached the Forest, we saw the Alps, and for some time, some nearer and plainer than others. Oh, it was glorious! (3rd of the 10th mo.)—Rose at five, but not off till past seven, and I was going to the Falls of the Rhine; at length I heard them roar, and saw them smoke; and as soon as the *voiture* stopped at the inn, I ran off to the Falls."

"*To Thos. Brightwell.*

"*Hotel of the Rhine Falls,*
10*th mo.*, 3*rd*, 1835.

". . . . I think, my dear friend, thou wilt not be sorry to hear a little of my goings on. My journey has been extended much beyond my original plan; but I am so delighted with the Rhine, that I could not resist the temptation and the opportunity—one which cannot occur again—of seeing it in its wondrous beauty here. Three times have I visited the Falls to-day; and if the moon rises bright, I am to visit them again. We came yesterday from Friburg, and to that place we went from Baden-Baden, a beautiful spot; but there is no water except in the environs, and I admire no place where water is not. Friburg Cathedral is most beautiful. They say Strasburg is finer; *nous verrons.* From Friburg our route lay through a very steep, mountainous country, and through the Black Forest, that haunt of banditti in former times, and the scene of so many tales and romances. It is sublime in its dark-browed beauty still, and a fine moon added to the solemn calm of the scene. But the Alps! Long before we saw the Forest, the snow mountains were in sight; and also, long before we were in Switzerland, Swiss cottages, Swiss châlets, and Swiss costumes, met our eyes at every turn. We went, just after we left Friburg, up a steep, rocky

defile, and up mountains, and through forests, to the top of which our eyes could scarcely reach, and in which the exquisite beauty of foliage and colouring went *de pair* with sublimity; and from the top of these passes the snow mountains first met my eager gaze. This morning we set off at six precisely we are at present travelling in a return carriage, which holds us and our luggage, and we find such modes of conveyance the cheapest and the best."

"It was half-past twelve when we reached this hotel. *Chemin faisant*, I heard the roar of the Falls, and saw them smoke; and while my friend stayed to eat her breakfast, I (who had coffee before starting) could not delay my visit to this long-desired scene, and I hurried down a steep path to it, which, if under less powerful influences, I should have cautiously trodden; but I arrived safe at a railing near the Fall, and was awhile satisfied. But I soon changed my place, and walked till I came in front of the mighty torrent. Oh, those busy, restless waters! No one can fancy what they are; they must be seen to be conceived of. Some persons are disappointed when they see them, and, in one respect, so should I have been, had not prints prepared me for what I was to expect. I am used to see and admire cascades that fall from a height over one narrow rock, and then over another, and perhaps over another still; but *this* is, I may say, like Niagara, a *table* or flat fall. It

is a wide river coming to an edge or wall of rocks, and leaping over them, then gracefully rolling on like liquefied aqua-marine—that beautiful green stone, of such exquisite tint and clearness. The *chute* itself is like the purest snow; but ever and anon, as the sun shone on it, some of the tumbling masses falling over the rocks below the great fall, were like liquid sapphires, and of the palest, purest blue. Still the Rhine is here, as a river, unlike its usual self, of the full green blue, like the precious stone I have named. In its *best* dress, where the boats go, thou mayest remember, it is of that undefinable light-bluish green, the colour of Dresden china. When it flows smoothly on at this place, it turns up a narrow channel, and glides along through richly-wooded rocks, and is seen no more. Oh, it is a glorious river! and had it no banks, I should love it for itself alone. There is something awful in the constant roar and eternal motion of these waters. The sea is sometimes calm, and its roar becomes a gentle murmuring; but these rolling waterfalls seem to know no change, but fall and roar for ever, exempt from the common doom of created things, which is to alter and to end. There is an inhabited castle on a rock beside the Rhine Falls. I should like to know whether its inhabitants have of necessity acquired the habit of speaking so loud as to break the drum of the ears of their acquaintances.

"We go on improving in our enjoyments. I

mean, the natural beauties we see go on increasing in sublimity and charm; and so they had need, to console me for my trying absence from my religious duties and opportunities, and my religious friends. My sabbath-days! Ah, there's the trial! But when I left home, I had no anticipation that my absence would be thus prolonged. I never contemplated so long a tour. We did mean to go back by Holland, but have given that up. . . . . I am very, very home-sick; however, if permitted to return in health and safety, I shall do so with a deeply thankful heart, and I can also add, with a heart still more attached to the friends I have so long deserted. We have associated occasionally with some pleasant men and women, and have sometimes travelled with them, but I have not desired to form acquaintances. We have mounted the Niederwald, and we visited the Brunnens We liked Heidelberg much; we were there five days. Chaude Fontaine we liked; but Spa, Wiesbaden and Aix-la-Chapelle I *hated;* they are sinks of dissipation, gambling, and vice, and even English ladies gamble there at the public table, in the public rooms, and at all hours. Nowhere, and by *none*, is the first day of the week kept holy. True, the English, as well as the Germans, go to church after the Lutherans and Catholics are come out of it;—but *cela suffit.*

"We occasionally see an English newspaper, or rather, *Galignani's Messenger*, and are amused at

O'Connell's progress, but alarmed at Spanish affairs. . . . . Farewell, till I return from my walk, or find I cannot go. I hear the waters roaring most invitingly. . . . . Just returned; the moon showed herself, *de temps en temps*, but not enough. However, I dare say she is now gilding the waters well; but I had no right, I thought, to keep my poor guide out of his bed for my pleasure; so I came away, having seen her rays sparkling on one side of the river; but I doubt whether her beams would ever reach the Fall, so as to convert it into diamonds. Thus I console myself. Farewell; love to thy circle. Let my aunt, E. Alderson, know of this letter from her vagrant and, as yet, far-distant niece. I thought of you all in the Bible week, and wished myself with you. . . . .

"Thy attached friend,

"A. Opie."

The next day the journey was continued to Zurich, "the green Rhine" being visible again for a few minutes on the way. The travellers made no stay at Zurich, but rowed for some time on "the noble lake, its banks all studded with country houses and gardens." On the 5th of October, by twilight, they reached Lucerne.

"Beautiful Lucerne! During the drive hither the Righi was before us, unveiled almost all the way, and now we found him on the banks of the

lake, *as it seemed;* on either side were snow mountains, in rows, one behind another, filling up the lake in one place, so as to make it seem impassable by boat. The moon was rising, the sun setting; a neck of green land, covered with flowers, was shooting into the lake near where I was, and the whole scenery was lovely beyond description. Our inn was eight stories high, my room five; but then it commanded the lake and its beauties, and I was never tired of looking out of my window. From the balcony I saw the moon rolling its flood of light into the bosom of the lake, the Righi in deep shadow, the snow hills of a ghostly white, and the rays just catching on some of their sharp peaks.

"Mount Pilate, which rises just behind our hotel, is the most beautifully outlined and grandest mountain I have yet seen. (6th inst.)—We rowed on the lake to where the rocks and hills form a complete cross—four cantons at the end of the four arms—Uri, Friburg, Unterwald, and Lucerne. The wooded rocks come down straight into the lake, and the effect is fine; but there is no walk on the banks, as at Zurich. We dined at the *table d'hôte;* the dinner was excellent; in short, this hotel, both in rooms, situation, fare, and attendance, is perfect. The next morning I saw the sun rise at six, behind the Righi, from my window, and fill the lake below with crimson light. Oh, it was glorious! but so fleeting. It was beautiful to see

the mists rolling off the mountains. We were very sorry to come away."

During the next two days rain and mist prevailed, and the mountains were closed in; no Jungfrau visible. At Berne, at the *table d'hôte*, Mrs. Opie found herself placed beside a marquise, whom, from her accent, she supposed must be English. On inquiry, it proved that she was born English, but was the widow of a French peer, the Marquis Lally Tollendal. How, as she heard that name, did memory, in a moment, leap over the forty years that had passed since she had seen the Count, then an emigrant, in exile from his country; and when, full of the enthusiasm of youth, she had addressed to him a "Quatrain" on his "Defence of his Father," and had received from him, in acknowledgment, a French poem of one hundred lines!*

The sun at length broke out, but it was only for a passing hour; a "piece of the Jungfrau and one or two snow hills were visible, and no more." Tantalized, and weary of waiting, on the 11th the travellers proceeded to Thun, but were still pursued by rain and mist. However, at Interlachen, the prospect was lighted up in sunshine, and they saw the distant Alps "in beautiful and glorious succession—a scene never to be forgotten."

* This poem is still in existence, and was preserved among her papers.

"Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow.
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gathers around these summits, as to show
How earth may pierce to heaven, yet leave vain man below."

Mrs. Opie was greatly distressed, on her arrival at Thun, at reading the announcement of Mrs. Joseph John Gurney's death in *Galignani*. Of this painful event she thus writes:—

"Most afflicting and unexpected tidings!—the death of my beloved young friend, Mary, the wife of my dearest and best friend, J. J. G. I had learned to love her dearly. By constant and never-failing experience, I knew the generosity of her heart and the openness of her hand in giving; her will to do good was even greater than her power. To her husband she was the heightener of his joys; the sharer, and I may say, assistant, of his literary labours; to his children she was a most kind, affectionate, and judicious mother; to me she was ever a kind, attentive friend, and I looked forward to her being one of the comforts of my old age. But she is gone before me, and has left a blank which cannot be filled up. Alas! how many are deploring with me her loss! But it is my misery to deplore her alone in a foreign land—deplore, I mean, for the sake of others; for she, I can have no doubt, is gone to glory, to that Redeemer,

through whom alone she hoped for acceptance, and for the joys of the world to come." . . . . .

Mrs. Opie ceased to make any entry in her journal for many days after this. She proceeded to Basle and Friburg, and thence to Strasburg and Manheim, where she found letters that cheered and refreshed her. Here she enters in her note-book :—

"So thankful to be here! To-morrow I hope to be on the Rhine, and my face turned towards home. May I not be disappointed! I hope fearfully, and trust humbly."

On the 22nd of October they were at Mayence, where they went on board the boat, and had for their travelling companion the Princess of Saxony, who, attracted by the singularity of the Quaker costume, opened a conversation with Mrs. Opie, and having asked her name, exclaimed, "Quoi! l'auteur célèbre!" and immediately causing two seats to be placed on the deck, she proceeded to avail herself of the opportunity to make the acquaintance of one whom she had long known by her works.

At Cologne they took leave of the Rhine. "I rose (she says) in the night to look at the river, and for the last time gazed on it from the spot where I first saw it. How much had I undergone of trial in many ways since I saw it last! I felt humbled, but resigned and contented, and, I trust, *taught*. How thankful I felt that the journey and

voyage were over, and I in health and safety; and one cloud only—the removal of dearest M. G.—over my prospect; but that was a dense one indeed."

On the 27th they reached Brussels, from whence Mrs. Opie proceeded, next day, to Ghent, in order to accomplish her charitable object. Arrived there, she hastened to the "maison des aliénées," and was gladly welcomed by the inmates, who were most agreeably surprised to find she had come over to Ghent entirely on this errand of pity. Next day she saw the physician, and obtained from him the necessary statement of the case; after which, she left, as she says, "thankful to the Almighty for having seemingly smiled on my effort, and much relieved in my mind; and on my return, I found a letter directing £10 to be placed at my disposal for this case. What an evident sanction to my proceeding! How did I bless the Giver of all good!"

On the 1st of November, the two friends parted at Lisle, and Mrs. Opie, travelling all night, reached Calais, where she writes, "So ends my journal of my journey; would it were a better record of better things! But I am returned, *good things* more endeared to me than ever; and when I saw Calais to-day, and remembered what I was when I first saw it, in 1802, I felt overwhelmed and humbled with a sense of being richer, wiser, and happier, in one sense, than I was then. For I have learned to know my Saviour, and not as a teacher and a prophet only, but as the Redeemer;

as Him who died that I might live, and through whose merits alone I am to be saved. Glory be to God the most high, for this greatest of all his mercies!

"A. O.

"*2nd of* 11*th mo.*, 1835."

The next day, on board the "Lord Melville," another entry tells us that she was "off Margate," and, looking on the Thames, she says, "It is broader than the Rhine, where we are, and, perhaps, everywhere, but not so lovely. But it is my own river, and all is now English, and I rejoice to see dear England again. What a grateful heart shall I have on landing! but ought I not to have one everywhere? I trust I have, though some circumstances call forth the expression of it more frequently than others."

On the evening of the 7th of November, she reached Norwich in safety.

CHAPTER VII.

Mrs. Opie returned from her trip up the Rhine, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, in the month of November, 1835. This was her last journey; and, from this time, her absences from home were never of long duration, but limited to a few weeks in London, and occasional visits to her friends in the neighbourhood of Norwich. She did not continue many months in the lodgings in St. Giles'-street, but removed to Lady's-lane, where she had commodious apartments, and in which she remained until her final settlement in the Castle Meadow house. In this home she established herself, surrounded by the portraits, which hung on the walls of her parlour, and appeared to great advantage when lighted up at night by wax lights in branch lamps. The most beautiful of them, the portrait of herself, is not described by her pen. It was painted soon after her marriage, and was engraved, though very indifferently, in "The Cabinet," a periodical of the

day, at the time of Mr. Opie's death. This picture is certainly very charming, and is also admirable as a work of art.*

Bright colours Mrs. Opie delighted in, and she indulged this taste in a peculiar and ingenious manner. She had several prisms set in a frame, and mounted like a pole-screen; and this unique piece of furniture stood always in her window, and was a constant source of delight to her. "Oh! the exquisite beauty of the prisms on my ceiling just now!" she writes; "it is a pleasure only to look at it. I think that green parrots and macaws, flying about in their native woods, must look like that." Frequently she would move the frame in all directions, so as to throw the reflection now on one of the pictures, and now on the face of a friend who chanced to be sitting by; and then, with a merry laugh, she would comment on the funny effects produced, of green or blue noses, and yellow eyes, etc. Flowers, too, were her constant companions; she luxuriated in them, and filled her window-sills with stands of them, and covered her tables with bouquets; their most luscious scents seemed not too strong for her nerves. Light, heat, and fragrance were three indispensables of enjoyment for her.

It has been truly said, that her mornings, during the latter years of her life, were spent in an almost

* The engraving which forms the frontispiece to this volume is from this picture.

constant succession of receiving visitors and writing letters. Everybody who came to Norwich sought her; old friends, acquaintances, and strangers, hastened to pay her their respects; and she loved to welcome all, and to give a cordial greeting to each. The extent of her correspondence was such, that it would have been a burden, had it not been a delight. In a letter written in 1849, she said, in her vivacious manner, "Were writing even an effort to me, I should not now be alive, but must have been *absolument épuisée;* and it might have been inserted in the bills of mortality,—'Dead of letter-writing, A. Opie.' My maid and I were calculating the other day how many letters I wrote in the year, and it is not less than six in a day, besides notes." Indeed, she scattered about her pretty three-cornered notes in a delightful profusion; they came on every little occasion, to bear her small messages of kindness or inquiry, and were frequently transmitted by means of a small page, whom she called her 'sunbeam,' so swiftly did he fly to do her bidding.

"It was delightful at all times to receive her letters," says Mrs. Hall;* "her feelings were so well expressed, her criticisms (she hardly ever wrote of what she did not admire) were so overflowing with kindness. She felt so much pleasure in giving praise, that she never appeared to be

* In her notice of Mrs. Opie, given in the Art Journal, No 61.

happy until she had poured forth all she thought, to those who, she well knew, would sympathize with her."

Her pen was also diligently employed in writing for various periodicals of the day. She regretted afterwards that she had not kept a list of the publications to which she had sent contributions, as she was frequently applied to by friends, anxious to identify her verses, etc. Many smaller pieces, both of prose and poetry, appeared in the "Annuals" year by year; and several papers, entitled "Reminiscences of an Authoress," were published in Tait's and in Chambers' Magazines, about this time. These were short papers, giving her recollections of some of the distinguished persons with whom she had met in former years:—Alexander Wedderburne, Baron Loughborough, Earl of Rosslyn, Sir Walter Scott, Lady Rosslyn, a Party at Lady E. Whitbread's, etc. etc. There is one of these memoirs of the past preserved among her MSS., and, as I believe, never published, which is given here as a specimen of her powers of description. It is an account of a speech made by Mr. Erskine, in a right-of-way cause in Norwich, at which Mrs. Opie was present. This event occurred in the year 1805, but it was not the first time of her seeing this great orator. She thus describes the impression made on her by a momentary glance she had once had, when she was disappointed of hearing him:—

"Well do I remember him, as I first saw him, entering for a few minutes, and taking a hasty survey of the court. I was immediately struck with the look of intelligent inquiry which he cast over the eager crowd assembled in the hope of hearing him. That eye reminded me of the description of the eye of Ledyard, the eastern traveller; for it looked 'bright and restless, and its rapid glance seemed to observe, in its brief survey, as much as other eyes in a more lengthened one.' I had also before observed the same expression in the eye of Bonaparte, when, standing near the marble stairs of the Tuileries, I saw him as he ascended them, and looked on a group of English assembled to gaze at him. I much regretted that the interest which his (Erskine's) appearance excited in me was not to be increased by the well-known melody of his voice. I had afterwards, however, an opportunity of hearing him in the year 1805, when I was in Norwich, on a visit to my father.

"Being very early in court, I obtained a seat by the side of the judge, Sir Alexander Macdonald, and saw and heard everything to the greatest advantage. In that place I remained the whole day, except when, on being assured that my place should be kept for me, I went home to tea; but soon returned to the scene of action, where I stayed all night, for I could not bear to go away without hearing the great orator's reply to the defendant's counsel: he (Erskine) appeared on the side of the

plaintiff. As I was desirous that the plaintiff should gain her cause, I had been alarmed to find, by the speech of the eloquent advocate of the defendant, how much could be said on both sides, and was, therefore, anxious to hear by what means his arguments could be rendered powerless. Therefore, although listening with delighted attention and wonder to the powerful cross-examination, I wished it over; but witness, on the defendant's side, succeeded to witness; the audience gradually became smaller and smaller; and although Lord Brougham, with his usual eloquence and felicity of expression, has said, that 'juries declared they found it impossible to remove their looks from Mr. Erskine, when he had, as it were, riveted and fascinated them by his first glance,' I am obliged to confess that some of this Norfolk jury began visibly to nod, and it seemed likely that, except the judge, the high-sheriff, the barristers, the officers of the court, and myself, there would soon be no hearers awake, and the beams of rising day were forcing themselves through the windows. The observant Erskine took the hint, so palpably given, and, coming up to me, kindly said, 'Go home, go home! I shall not reply to-night; but you had better be here by eight in the morning;' and, soon after, the court adjourned to that hour. . . . .

"I was in court again by half-past seven, but too late to obtain a seat, and I stood many hours in a painful position; but I was soon made unconscious

of it by the eloquence of Erskine; for during those hours he spoke, and hushed a court crowded even to suffocation, into the most perfect stillness. Never was the power of an orator over his audience more evident or more complete. The plaintiff gained her cause, and her advocate new laurels; for I know that those best qualified to form a correct judgment on the subject, namely, his brother lawyers who were present, declared that they had never before heard Mr. E. so great in reply. Fortunate, therefore, were those who heard him that day, as never again was he heard to equal advantage. A few months afterwards he was made Lord Chancellor; and when, while talking to him at a party in London, I told him I was every day intending to go into the Court of Chancery, in hope of hearing him speak in his new capacity, his reply was, 'Pray do not come; you will not hear anything worth the trouble. I am nothing now. You heard the last and best of me at Norwich last year.' This was, indeed, too true; and those powers of forensic eloquence, for which he was so celebrated, he could exercise no longer. His audiences in future life were almost wholly different from his former ones; and those attractions, so peculiarly his own, were not necessary on the judgment-seat in the Court of Chancery, and would have been, in a measure, thrown away in the House of Lords. Fortunate, therefore, I repeat it, were those who heard him in the right-of-way cause at Norwich, and when he

forcibly reminded me of the portrait of Garrick, drawn by the pen of Sheridan, in his unequalled monody—a portrait which might have been supposed to be that of the Hon. Thomas Erskine; for his, indeed, were

> " 'The grace of action, the adapted mien,
> Faithful as nature to the varied scene;
> The expressive glance, whose subtle comment draws
> Entranced attention and a mute applause,' " etc.

The year 1836 seems to have passed in the quiet of ordinary routine, unmarked by change, other than of short visits to friends residing in the neighbourhood of Norwich. In the year following (1837), Mrs. Opie's revered friend, J. J. Gurney, went on a religious visit to the United States, and was absent nearly three years. On his return, he printed, for circulation among his friends, an account of this journey, "described in familiar letters to Amelia Opie." This interesting volume is very scarce, as only a limited number of copies were given. One great charm it possesses is that of simple *bonhomie;* and the pure enjoyment of natural scenes and objects breathes through every page a tone of happiness and love. Not unfrequently the author indulges his sportive fancy, by depicting, in verse, any sight that specially interested him. Here is one of these poetical pictures,—he describes a day of early spring, in the neighbourhood of "that noble expanse," Long Island Sound:—

"Blue were the waters of the Sound,
That spread before my view;
And the skies were azure all around,
And still of a brighter hue
Was the wing of the bird that flitted there
Upon the spreading oak.
But the giant boughs were brown and bare,
No verdure yet bespoke,
In the trees above, or the fields below,
The genial sap of spring.
Songs of the lark in chorus flow,—
'Tis prophecy they sing;
Excited by the unclouded beam,
They pour the votive lay,
Gaily predicting, as 't would seem,
An early coming day,
When, bursting into glorious green,
The hill, the vale, the grove,
Shall usher in a fairy scene,
The reign of joy and love."

Mr. Gurney, telling of his adventures when in the "backwoods," was wont to relate how, on one occasion, his eyes were greeted with the sight of a familiar object—one of his friend Amelia's notes. It was pasted, as an ornament or precious relic, upon a fire-screen.

During the course of this long absence from his native land, he experienced a very striking "token of the ever-watchful and most merciful providence of God." He has thus described the occurrence: ". . . . When we were fifty miles south of Savannah, we were overtaken by a fearful storm. About eight o'clock in the evening, we observed some dark clouds over the horizon, and summer-

like lightning playing to the north and west, and the moon soon after rose of a blood-red colour. For some time, we imagined that the clouds were gradually dispersing; but, after two hours had elapsed, these hopes were annihilated. The clouds met over our heads, and veiled the moon in deep darkness, and the rain poured down in torrents; the ship flew before the wind, and awful flashes of forked lightning, with thunder immediately following, gave ample proof that the weapons of 'heaven's artillery' were nigh at hand, even at our doors. Suddenly, the vessel received a terrible shock. Almost all the sailors were knocked down; the captain himself received a stroke which left black traces on his legs. Either a blazing rope, or the appearance of it in electric fluid, was seen falling on the deck; a violent smell of sulphur assailed us; both the upper and lower cabins were filled with smoke; and it was the general belief and cry that the ship was on fire. At the same time, the cook ran into the cabin, and told us that the hold of the ship was filling rapidly with water.

"But beyond this climax we were not permitted to pass. The storm, after raging about an hour, rapidly subsided; the sky became clear, the moon regained her ascendency, our poor stricken sailors began to recover; and, on examination, the ship was found to have escaped both fire and flood. The next morning we discovered the effects of the lightning. The sails were pierced with holes, the

mainmast was cracked, and the maintop-gallant and royal yards shivered. To us it was an agreeable circumstance that the day after the storm was the first of the week. At the appointed hour, the ship's company assembled on deck under no common feelings of seriousness. The 40th chapter of Isaiah was read to us, commencing with the exhortation, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,' and ending with the cheering declaration, that 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.' Afterwards the whole company sat in silence; and, during the solemn hour that ensued, we were reminded of the words of the poet:—

> "'Unfathomable wonder,
> And mystery Divine,
> The voice that speaks in thunder,
> Says, Christian, I AM THINE.'"

Well might the pious writer of this striking account call on the "large circle of friends and acquaintance" who welcomed his safe return to his native land, to join him in "humble thankfulness to the God of nature and of grace, the controller of storms and thunderbolts, and the preserver of men;" and among the many hearts that responded to this appeal, there was none more sincere and ardent in its gratitude and joy than that of Amelia Opie, the friend to whom he dedicated the narrative of his journeyings. She thus characteristically mentions the subject, in a letter written at the time: "No bells will ring to celebrate the *Christian warrior's* return; but how many hearts in the

various grades of society in this city and its environs will throb with exultation, and breathe silently, if not vocally, the solemn strain of thanksgiving!"

In the course of this year Mrs. Opie records the arrival of Bishop Stanley and his family in Norwich; she speaks of it as "a great acquisition," and their friendship proved indeed a source of much happiness to her. There is a short note in her pocket-book, written about this time, which, as illustrative of one of the excellences she specially cultivated, deserves to be given here:—"J'ai toujours attaché une importance extrême à ce qu'on appelle vulgairement, les petites choses: des attentions delicates, quand elles sont persistantes, prouvent la constante occupation de la pensée."* The proverb says, "If you take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves," and this rule is applicable to everything, I think, and particularly to human conduct, and the formation of character. Take care of indulging in little selfishnesses; learn to consider others in trifles; be careful to fulfil the minor social duties; and the mind, so disciplined, will find it easier to fulfil the greater duties, and the character will not exhibit that trying inconsistency which one sees in great, and, often, in pious persons."

* "I have always attached great importance to what are vulgarly called 'little things;' delicate attentions, when persisted in, evince the constant occupation of the thoughts."

The autumn and winter of the following year brought with them returns of the malady from which Mrs. Opie had before suffered, and her medical attendants were of opinion that she must in future expect such attacks; in which she quietly acquiesced, saying, "No doubt I must." She seemed to have nerved herself to bear pain without complaint, and to the close of her life she showed much heroism in the patient endurance of bodily suffering, rarely betraying by word or gesture her uneasiness. There was occasionally an expression which those who knew her intimately could read; and if at such a time the inquiry was put, "Are you in pain?" her answer would intimate that she was so, but she would sometimes add, "I am so used to it, that I don't mind it."

Among her private papers was one which tells whence her support was derived, and to what source she looked for strength in time of trial. She has headed it, A Prayer for Trust in God in Sickness:—"O Almighty God, our only help in time of trouble, look with pity and compassion upon me, now under thine afflicting hand. Be thou my stay and confidence under all my sorrows and afflictions, and suffer me not to sink under the weight of them, through any dejection or faintness of spirit. Give me such an entire trust and confidence in thy mercy, through the merits of my dear Redeemer, that I may cast all my care upon thee, and with cheerfulness commit myself into

thy hands, assuredly believing that 'all things shall work together for good to them that love thee.' Make me willing and ready to yield to thy wisdom, and to prefer thy will before my own; to be contented to bear what thou pleasest, and to be eased of my burden in thy time, which is always best. But, O Lord, however thou art pleased to deal with my body, yet spare my soul, I beseech thee, and deliver it from the bitter pains of eternal death. Grant, Lord, that, whether I live I may live unto thee, or whether I die I may die unto thee; so that, living or dying, I may be thine, through Jesus Christ, my ever-blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen."

Mrs. Opie's cousin, Mrs. Briggs, died in the month of September, 1839. She was with this endeared relative during her last hours, and her distress and grief at the painful loss were very great. "These are the trials," she wrote, "which make lengthened life, or long life, appear so undesirable; but 'it is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.'"

The winter of 1840, and spring of the following year, were passed by Mrs. Opie much as usual. She suffered from occasional attacks of pain, but these did not prevent her from exerting herself in constant efforts to assist the needy, and to meet the wants of the numerous claimants on her benevolence and charity. That she sometimes felt the pressure of these efforts too much, is evident from

many of her notes. In one of them, dated 3rd month, 1841, she says:—" . . . I am weary of having to give the little time I may have yet to live to the business of others; and it saddens me. Two letters are come, involving me in writing and trouble again. But, be it so; it is a favour to be made useful to others, and my life here seems passing away in writing about other people's affairs; well, the time may soon come when I cannot work."

Nor was this an imaginary pressure, as was abundantly evident to those who saw her day by day. Unwearied in her efforts to relieve the necessities of others, when her own resources were exhausted, she made it a point of conscience to exert all her influence with those who possessed wealth and power, on behalf of the object of her charity. Hence the frequent calls upon her time and ingenuity. She taxed herself to meet the wishes of those, who, sure of her generous sympathy, were not, perhaps, so careful as they should have been to avoid imposing upon her kindness. The truth is, I cannot find words to express adequately her free, full, and spontaneous generosity. She gave, as she once laughingly told me, because she could not help it. If ever there were one who might read with a smile of hope and a tear of gratitude the award pronounced by the Saviour's lips, it was she: —" Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and

running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

In the spring of 1842, Mrs. Opie was again in London; and her notes give some lively touches, descriptive of the two months she passed there. She attended the yearly meeting as usual, and enjoyed, with much of her wonted animation, visiting her numerous friends. These notes show that, although she had numbered more than the allotted years of man's life, she was still able to enjoy the intercourse of society, and still alive as ever to the tender sympathies of compassion and benevolence

In the course of the summer, she paid her usual visit to the coast. "The weather seems so hot here," she wrote after her return, "I almost pine for the fresh sea-breezes. I like the book I borrowed of you (Lives of Physicians). It delights me to read how generous those great physicians were; how patriotic, and full of care for others. I feel proud of the faculty." This is quite a characteristic touch. She was always jealous for the credit and good name of the medical profession, and very desirous that its members should be held in high esteem, and their services liberally remunerated.

During this winter, and in the early spring of the following year, Mrs. Opie suffered from occasional returns of her disorder. The supports and consolations of Christian faith and trust were not, however, withheld; and in one of her notes she

sweetly expresses her confidence in a Father's love and wisdom. "My trials," she says, "are afflictive to nature; but I have long known and experienced that there is support in entire submission to God's will, in *little* as well as in great trials; and when I can buckle on that armour, I feel as if I could walk erect and securely."*

In May she was, as usual, in London; and writing thence says:—"Yearly meeting has engrossed me as much as ever; for I never missed *one* sitting since I obtained the great privilege of belonging to it; one which, I feel more and more every year, is the last thing increasing age will cause me to forego." Again, (7th mo. 12th)—"I have struck up a friendship with 'Sam Slick,' *alias* Judge Haliburton; but, alas! one of the American dele-

* A touching proof that she endeavoured to minister to others of the "consolations wherewith she herself was comforted of God," was afforded me at the time I was writing this. Visiting some poor people, I was shown a little book, called "The Invalid's Hymn-book," which had formerly belonged to one now no more, who had marked against her favourite hymns the names of two or three friends by whom they had been read to her. I chanced to open on a page containing the hymn, headed, "He openeth thine ear to discipline:"—

"Chamber of sickness! much to thee I owe,
Though dark thou be:
The lesson it imports me most to know
I owe to thee!" etc.

At the beginning of this hymn, I found these words written, "Read by dear Mrs. Opie to me, 1842," (the date,) and at the end again the words, "Dear Mrs. Opie!" Several others were similarly marked

gates carries away with him a large piece of my heart! It is grievous to make acquaintance with people, learn to love and admire them, and then bid them farewell for ever. Almost all the American delegates and their wives came to me on the 10th, to tea and supper. I had some friends to meet them, and they, wishing to be pleased, were so."

Among these Transatlantic friends was one, who afterwards wrote to Mrs. Opie, expressing the gratification he had felt in her society, and assuring her of the popularity and usefulness of her later works in America. He says: "... Your books have been very extensively read here; no work of Miss Edgeworth's or Mrs. Hemans' ever circulated more extensively than the 'Illustrations of Lying;' and I may with perfect truth say, I think that, next to the works of Hannah More and Miss Edgeworth, A. O.'s have been most read in America; and in this opinion I am supported by one of my colleagues whom I have consulted on the subject."

This summer seems to have been a very happy and busy one. The following extract from a note gives us a peep at one of her mornings:—"(8th mo. 16th.) I have seemed lately to want, for many necessary and good purposes, the most precious of all things, time. Other people's business and my own pleasures have prevented my writing before. At ten I must be out shopping; at eleven to the Magdalen; at two I must drive to see my aunt,

and say farewell; and then I am off to Kettering-ham, to a five o'clock dinner, as E. Sidney lectures at seven."

Mrs. Opie had been alarmed, during her stay in London, in the spring of 1841, by the serious indisposition of her cousin, Mr. Briggs. He had been suffering from pulmonary disorder, and the symptoms at length increased to an extent that seemed indicative of approaching dissolution. Under these painful circumstances, she received a summons to go to him, as he had expressed a wish to see her. On the 9th of January, 1844, she wrote: "I do so enjoy my home. In a morning, I am only too full of company; but when, at nightfall, I draw my sofa round, for a long evening to myself, I have such a feeling of thankfulness; and so I ought. It is well to see how the burden is fitted to the back by our merciful Father. I have been a lone woman through life; an only child; a childless widow; all my nearest ties engrossed by nearer ones of their own. If I did not love to be alone, and enjoy the privileges leisure gives, what would have become of me? But I love my lot, and every year it grows dearer still; though parting with beloved friends throws, for a while, a deep shadow over my path." . . . . And even then the shadow was upon her; for, six days after, she writes: "I go on my melancholy journey to-morrow, scarcely expecting to see my poor cousin alive; but he wishes to see me, and it is therefore my duty to

go." She remained with him to the last, and very touchingly describes the closing scenes. When all was over, she said: "Going into the gallery of pictures, where so many, alas! are unfinished, reminds me so powerfully of bygone days, when I stood in my *own* gallery, where finished and unfinished pictures abounded."

This melancholy visit was the last Mrs. Opie paid to the metropolis for a long period. During the next four years, she was closely engaged in attendance upon her aged aunt, Mrs. E. Alderson, and seldom left Norwich for more than a few days at a time.

After her return home, she wrote to Miss Gurney:—

"*5th mo., 7th.*

"My dearest A——

". . . . I fear that I shall feel the loss of London and the meeting; but at present I do not; for the duty and necessity of staying where I am is more evident every day, because my aunt is become so dependent upon me, that I could trust no one to attend to her wants but myself. I have seen A. Hodgkin at meeting and at the Grove. Her husband had a public meeting last night, and has again to-morrow. Such ministry as J. H——'s last night is what is rarely heard; it was soul-searching; and I only wished that hundreds could have heard it. I have sent a large boxful of repository purchases to M. G—— to-day. I kept shop." . . .

The last sentence alludes to the yearly sale at the repository, for the Norwich Sick Poor Society, held in the fine old building, St. Andrew's Hall, at which Mrs. Opie, for many years, kept a table or stall of fancy articles; and an admirable saleswoman she was. On one of these occasions she wrote to a friend: "Simeon's Life is most precious to me. I have had extracts from it made and printed, to be sold at the repository."

During the summer assize of this year, she was present in court, as usual; and among her papers, left in an unfinished state, is one, entitled, "Reminiscences of Judges' Courts, written in 1844." This piece, which was never completed, gives her recollections of these scenes, which she had, from an early period in her life, been in the habit of frequenting. It was a peculiar *penchant*, for which she endeavours to account at the close of her observations; and she traces it to the operation of the two prevalent feelings—love of excitement, and sympathy, or fellow-feeling. She adds: "Whatever be the cause of the pleasure I take in attending on these occasions, I hope it is an innocent gratification; . . . . and it is my conviction, that whatever brings us acquainted with, and interested in, the affairs and well-being of our fellow-creatures, in their varied stations and positions in society, may have a beneficial influence on our hearts, minds, and characters."

Though we may, perhaps, differ from Mrs. Opie as to the desirableness of encouraging the taste which she thus acknowledges and endeavours to justify, yet it seems indisputable that, in her peculiar instance, the results were not prejudicial. Her finer sensibilities did not become blunted, nor did she, on the other hand, indulge in a useless sentimentality of feeling, barren of practical results on the character and conduct. The interest excited in her mind on behalf of the unhappy criminals, whom she beheld the victims of their own evil passions, prompted her to desire, if possible, to aid in their reformation, and to awaken in the minds of those who were not wholly lost to the feelings of rectitude, the kindlings of repentance and better emotions. The result of these humane and pious feelings is seen in a MS. volume now before me, almost entirely in her own handwriting, entitled "Transactions of the Norwich Ladies' Association for Prison Discipline, formed 6th Oct., 1823." In the first leaf, she has written as follows:—

"*Norwich, Oct. 3rd*, 1823.

"We, the undersigned, agree to form ourselves into an association to visit the females in the different prisons belonging to the county of Norfolk and city of Norwich, namely, the city jails, the bridewell,

and the castle; and we consider the Lady Suffield as our patroness.

"Lucy Aggs. Amelia Opie.
"Henrietta Gurney. Catharine Gurney.
"Rachel Gurney. Lucy Aggs, jun.

"*Treasurer*, L. Aggs, jun.
"*Secretary*, Amelia Opie.

"We form the following resolutions for our future government:—'1st. A fund must be raised to defray the necessary expenses of the institution. 2nd. We agree to be a branch of the British Prison Society of Ladies, in London, and to correspond with them at least once a year.'

"It is agreed, that H. and R. Gurney visit every 5th day (Thursday) morning; L. Aggs, sen. and jun. on 3rd day (Tuesday) morning; and A. Opie and C. Gurney on 7th day (Saturday). We also resolve to read the Scriptures to the female prisoners whenever we visit; to see that the ignorant are instructed, and the idle employed; to keep a book, with an account of conduct; to have a small collection of books, suitable for the women, which are to be kept under lock and key, and given out by the visitors; to keep a watchful care over them, when discharged from the prison, particularly those who are going to Botany Bay; to meet on the 5th day (Thursday) of every month

"Further rules must be the result of experience."

In pursuance of these resolutions, this small band of Christian philanthropists commenced operations, at first amidst difficulties and some degree of opposition. Their "Second Report, sent to the British Society, 7th January, 1825," after detailing proceedings, concludes: "On looking back on the exertions of the past year, the ladies have cause to acknowledge, with pleasure and gratitude, that many of the difficulties they at first had to combat, are overcome, and they trust a little fruit of their labours is already to be seen; and though in some respects they have still to experience opposition, yet they anticipate with hope and encouragement the time when every prejudice will be removed, and when they will have free access into *all* the prisons.* They cannot close this report without mentioning two cases which augur well for the occasional success of their efforts." The cases are then particularized.

Appended to this report is the following notice, referring to the work which was then being carried on, single-handed and unknown, by the admirable and devoted Sarah Martin:†—

* They had been refused permission to visit the bridewell, and were "positively denied entrance there."

† See the Life of Sarah Martin, published by the Religious Tract Society, London.

"*Yarmouth.*

"The young woman who has so long and so indefatigably laboured in the prisons at Yarmouth, almost unknown and unassisted, now continues her exertions with the approbation of the magistrates. She instructs all the prisoners who desire it, in reading and writing; supplies the women with plain work, the produce of which is appropriated to their own use; and, as there is no service performed in the jail on a Sunday, she is in the practice of reading a sermon and the liturgy of the Church of England to the men and women collectively, twice a day. The number of women admitted into the jail during the year has been twenty, and into the bridewell nineteen; and although no particular instance of reformation has lately occurred, she hopes that, notwithstanding, her labours have been beneficial."

One-half of this volume is devoted to an account of the female prisoners in the city jail, which is entirely written by Mrs. Opie, and commencing in 1823, continues to the end of 1828, the last entry being January, 1829. The name and age, time of admittance, crime, sentence, times of trial and discharge are given, and some "observations" on the individual cases. In the great majority of instances, the prisoners seem to have conducted themselves with propriety and thankfulness towards the ladies; but in most, their subsequent conduct proved that their promises of amendment were

fallacious. There are a few pleasing exceptions, in which they were encouraged to hope better things; but it is evident that, after a trial of two or three years, circumstances were altered, and the ladies found less room for their interference. Their last recorded report to the British Society says, that while they "continue their attention to the jail and bridewell, as reported last year, from the smallness of the number of prisoners, and some other unavoidable circumstances, their visits have been less frequent." "The daily and very efficient labours of the chaplain of the jail, and the employment of the women by the mistress," are mentioned as rendering the assistance of the ladies unnecessary.

The first case entered in the "account of the prisoners," is that of a young woman, aged twenty, who was discharged at the end of six months; but was soon after committed to bridewell on suspicion of theft. Mrs. Opie writes: "While she was there, her conduct was so violent and improper, that the governor was obliged to confine her in the 'black hole,' as it is called. She was a second time committed to jail, April 7th, 1825; tried five days afterwards, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. She conducts herself exceedingly well in the jail. She has long been so notorious and pernicious a character in this city, that her conviction and sentence were received with rejoicing by all to whom she

was known. Her house was the general rendezvous of thieves and bad women; and she had been the ruin of many youths of both sexes. But, to be the worst of the bad, is a proof of no mean abilities; and it is really lamentable to see such power as this unhappy girl possesses, so awfully perverted. Her behaviour to the ladies is respectful and gentle." She was sent on board the "Midas" on the 2nd of July, having continued to conduct herself well in prison, and shown both diligence and ability in learning and performing all the tasks which the ladies set her.

This case may serve as a specimen of the others. I will only add, that of the fifty-one or fifty-two women named in all, twenty could not read. It will be remembered that, in her journal of the period, Mrs. O. from time to time mentions her visits to the jail, and observes on what she saw there. She continued her co-operation with the Society as long as it existed; and, in after years, up to a late period of her life, occasionally visited the women prisoners confined in the castle and jail.

I will close this chapter with an extract from one of Mrs. Opie's letters, written during this year (1844) to a friend, who seems to have expressed his anxiety for her spiritual welfare, and to have exhorted her to maintain a watchful state of preparation for the hour of her departure:—

". . . . Alas! I sometimes fear lest my house

be not in order; but no one can be more aware than I am, that I shall surely die; and my daily prayer is for ability to keep my lamp always burning, lest I be unprepared when the Bridegroom comes. But I do not talk or write upon the subject to others; for I presume the old know they are old; and the unhealthy, that they are liable to be called away, be they young or old; and I shrink from appearing to deem them so weakly blind as to want to be reminded that 'all flesh is as grass.'

"Oh! if my dear 'concerned' friends could but know my secret heart, and the deep thankfulness with which I every day receive the gift of another day of life, they would not do me the injustice to believe me so careless and so blind as not to hold many hours daily of serious communion with myself and my God. I say this, dear friend, to thee, because I wish to make thee more easy on my account than I now think thee to be." . . .

CHAPTER VIII.

The shades of evening were now gathering around the beloved subject of this little memoir. She had entered on her seventy-fifth year; and confinement and pain awaited her during a large part of her remaining days. Yet, on the whole, she was remarkably free from most of the infirmities, bodily and mental, usually attendant upon such advanced age. Her sight was perfect; it even excelled in keenness, so that she read, without difficulty, the smallest print, and wrote in the same minute and delicate characters, to the last. Her sense of hearing, too, though less acute, was not perceptibly impaired, and her carriage was as erect as of yore, and still indicative of vigour and energy. But it was her soul—the mind within—that never felt the frosts of age. Her heart beat warm, her eye kindled with living joy, and her spirit responded, like a well-tuned lyre, to every breath that passed over it. In all her sympathies and antipathies, too, she was so thoroughly womanly, with such quick sensibilities and vivid perceptions, such appreciation of little attentions, and cordial

interest in that which touched the hearts of others, that it was no wonder the young loved her. Perhaps never were so many young and fair faces seen clustering around an old one, as were to be found in her room, week after week. They came, and made her their *confidante;* and she dearly loved to hear the tales, and enter into the hopes and fond anticipations of youth.

Her love of fun, too, her merry laugh and ready repartee, made one forget that she had numbered threescore years and ten. If we would ask, whence came this bright and joyous old age, we may trace it, in part, to natural temperament: her nature was genial, her temper sweet, and, until a late period, her health was excellent. But, great as these natural advantages were, yet more was owing to religious principle and self-discipline. She was kind and forbearing, not merely because her temper was sweet; she was so on principle—in obedience to the great command of the gospel, "Love one another." The forgiveness of injuries was the one of the Christian duties which she most urgently enjoined, and most conscientiously practised. Her readiness to pass by an unkindness did not spring from easy indifference; no one was more keenly sensitive to any want of kindness. When she was deeply wounded on one occasion, and could find no excuse for the offender, she looked sad and disquieted, and at length said, "I hope I shall be able, in time, to *forget* this." One of her latest acts was to burn

an impertinent and unfeeling letter, which had been addressed to her some time before; and, as she did so, she expressed her forgiveness of the writer:—"It ought never to have been written," she said, "but I forgive her; and the best place for it is the fire."

It was a pain to her to think otherwise than well of any one; it was a real *pang* to be constrained to believe that he had acted unworthily. She wept over the misdeeds of others, and rejoiced in their good and noble actions. She was "tender-hearted" towards their failings and infirmities, and would not believe an evil report. There was really nothing which so roused her indignation as that any one should spread a malicious rumour; and I have seen her colour with displeasure, and plainly indicate how offensive she felt it to be, when any one ventured to indulge in backbiting in her presence. If she ever offended the self-love of any, I am inclined to believe it was by showing them that they had lowered themselves in her opinion by uncharitable talk. The "virtuous indignation of her eye" could hardly fail to inflict a righteous punishment.

It would be easy to give instances of her true loveliness of spirit and careful observance, in her own personal conduct, of the Christian graces and virtues which she had, in her writings and with her lips, enjoined others to cultivate. It may be allowed me to mention one instance of her humble-minded ingenuousness, in acknowledging herself to have com-

mitted a fault. I was one day calling upon her, when there was some one present who was afflicted with deafness, and talked in a loud, harsh voice. After this individual had left the room, Mrs. O., chancing to refer to something that had passed, repeated the words of her visitor in his dissonant tones—in fact, mimicked him to the life. Scarcely had I reached my home, before I received a note from her, saying how much self-reproach she was suffering, in the thought of the "unchristian and vulgar action" of which she had been guilty, and begging it might be "excused and forgiven."

Mrs. Opie has stigmatized mimicry in her "Detraction Displayed," as being a twofold detraction, —acted, as well as spoken; and has especially warned her readers against it, because of its great power and attraction; few being able to resist its fascination, for it gratifies the vanity of hearer and actor at the same time; and yet, who can endure to be the subject of mimicry? In close proximity to this detracting and treacherous propensity, she always ranked that malevolent pleasure in inflicting pain which vents itself in sudden sarcasms or flings. She called this a "cat-like" nature; and she hesitated not to say,—"Old as I am in years, and still older in worldly experience, there are many, even among my young acquaintance, from whose detracting laugh and sneering observation I occasionally shrink, feeling myself both unsafe and uncomfortable in their presence. Oh! there are

many cats in the world; and I have seen even youth and beauty become suddenly offensive by the expression of malevolent pleasure at having inflicted pain by a *coup de patte*."

Mrs. Opie always considered it a vulgar error, or an observation the result of envy, to say that clever persons are usually satirical. She said, her experience convinced her, on the contrary, that the most satirical of her acquaintance were those who had more quickness than sense; that a tendency to see the ridiculous and ludicrous in persons and things, is nothing more than a quickness of observation which even children possess. "There is something," she said, "tempting and agreeable in talking over one's friends and acquaintances, and children soon learn to enjoy it. 'Mamma,' cried a little boy, while his parents were receiving some morning visitors, 'when will these people go away, that we may talk about them?' In short," she added, "detraction requires so little ability, that I wonder we are not too proud to be guilty of it."

While I am thus recalling to mind the many lovely and amiable traits that adorned her character, I am powerfully reminded of her own statement: "The consciousness of truth and ingenuousness gives a radiance to the countenance, and a charm to the manner, which no other quality of mind can equally bestow." Nor can I help appealing to those who knew her, whether she did not present in her own person a striking example of the truth

of this. The bright beaming glance of her eye, and the winning loveliness of her deportment, spoke her true in heart, and were the fair reflections of that inner rectitude which is "the sunshine of the breast." "She was one of the most sincere, most honest of women I ever knew," was the testimony of a friend who had known her long and well; and the word "probity" was justly applied to her by the friend of her youth. Gladly would I linger over these pleasing and soothing recollections, and endeavour to draw them in the colours of vivid truthfulness to my reader; but it is time that I continue the regular course of her "life-story."

We have seen that the loneliness of her lot was felt increasingly as her years multiplied; but most happy for her was it, that, amidst the failure of earthly supports, she was sustained by a consciousness of the Divine presence and grace; and it was this which cheered her solitary hours, and inspired the sentiment with which we find her entering on a new year. She thus writes:—

"(2nd mo., 4th, 1845.)—I can say with truth, I am never less alone than when alone; home is becoming daily more and more the place that suits me best. I have many cares, and some trials; but I feel, in the depths of my heart, that all is right, and that all has been, and will be, for my good. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"

The death of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton occurred

during this month, causing another gap in the circle of Mrs. Opie's intimate friends. She had been long and greatly attached to him and all his family, and cordially united in his views for the abolition of slavery, and in his desires and plans for the improvement of Africa; and her notes indicate the painful emotion with which she heard of his removal from earth.

The winter of this year was very stormy, and the tempests which prevailed on the eastern coast made great inroads at Cromer and in the neighbourhood. The early love of Mrs. Opie for that endeared spot seems to have been kindled afresh on this occasion; and writing to Miss Gurney, she said, "I am very sorry for that dear West Cliff—

> 'Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
> A stranger yet to pain.'

There used to be, I am sure, a field, before one comes to S. Hoare's field, where I used to gather the blue bugloss, and deck myself out in it. Such is my love of Cromer, I sometimes think when I lost my dear father, I should have settled myself there, or very near it (on the West Cliff, probably), had I not joined Friends. I try not to be impatient of the duration of this winter, and I rejoice at the belief (probably, however, an erroneous one) that my *only* tree, an elm, in my south garden, into which my sitting-room looks, is budding. It is a pain to me to think of the sufferings of inanimate

nature, as well as of human nature. I grieve for the cruel sea's inroads at Cromer. But as almost all things work together for some good, these dangers give rise to circumstances productive of conduct honourable to one's species; as, for instance, that of the pious child, who would not be saved till his father's safety was secured. Generally speaking, I own I have long thought that, in these days, filial piety was at a low ebb; but in this instance, assuredly, the high tides have floated it into my good opinion again. . . I am just returned from Earlham, where I have been passing a happy day and a half with J. J. Gurney and Eliza; no other guest there but myself. We called at dear W. Forster's door on our way home."

Mrs. Opie made frequent visits this year from time to time among her friends, and mentions with peculiar pleasure meeting Mr. Hallam, during her stay at Ketteringham. Although occasionally suffering from accesses of her old disorder, she was, on the whole, free from much pain. Her notes refer to the great enjoyment she felt in attending various public religious meetings, and also the course of lectures at the Museum, delivered by Professor Sedgwick. On the return of the autumnal season, her malady distressed her much; and during her customary stay at Northrepps she was quite confined to the house, "never quitting it," she said, "after I entered it, until I got into the carriage which took me away; but though unwell

during the eighteen days I spent there, I had much enjoyment." Writing in October of the following year, to her beloved friend there, she said: "Oh, how sorry I am that I cannot come to thee, even in a carrier's cart! but I cannot. Dr. Hull says it would be madness; and I have so much cold and cough besides, that I fear I shall not be able to leave the house at all. It is a disappointment to me not to have paid my usual visit to Cromer, and to feel there the gratitude due to Him who has, in unmerited mercy, spared me, that I might have been enabled once more to enjoy the society of my dear friends at that place, so full to me of early and pleasant recollections."

In the course of the summer of 1846, she was cheered by a visit from Mrs. Backhouse, the daughter of Mr. J. J. Gurney, whom Mrs. Opie always called her grandchild, bringing with her her infant son, who was greeted as great-grandchild, and pronounced a darling. "I love all babies," she said; "but this one excels them all, in my eyes." Her cousin, Mr. R. Woodhouse, also visited her in the month of August; but amidst all her cheerful and sympathizing enjoyment, she suffered grievously; a sorrowful note written about this time tells how much. . . . . "You will be glad to hear I am better. This day week, I was in great pain for hours. How thankful I ought to be! Nothing can have exceeded Dr. Hull's attention; he came twice a day to me, and I am sure

his medicines have done me much good. . . . . Sir R. Peel's heart has stolen *mine*. That exquisite self-oblivion, and that prompt sympathy with poor Haydon's sorrows, even only four days before his death; and then the feeling and immediate reply to the hopes of the poor suicide, in his letter in his dying moments; and the prompt help, and the promised succour of his purse and influence at a future time, and when he (Sir Robert) was not himself lying on a bed of roses."

On the 4th of January, 1847, died Mr. J. J. Gurney. Three weeks before, he had been thrown from his pony, while crossing Orford-hill. At first he appeared not to have sustained much injury; and with thoughtful love he hastened to Lady's-lane, to inform his dear friend of the accident, saying that he could not bear she should hear of it from any other but himself, that he might assure her, with his own lips, of his safety. Alas! how little did either of them imagine that ere that moon had waned he would be sleeping the sleep of death; but so it was. The tidings of his departure came suddenly upon his aged friend; she knew not that he was in danger till the night before the event, and could scarcely "believe that it was true" which she heard, for it seemed like a dream. Alas! as she gazed her last on the motionless form of her "dearest and best friend on earth," she knew that it was a sad reality, and that she should see him no more. This

was indeed a heart-blow; and shortly after, his beloved daughter, Mrs. Backhouse, following him to the grave, there was an entire breaking-up of the much and long-loved circle at Earlham. Mrs. Opie attended the funeral of her friend. She saw him laid low in the midst of his usefulness; cut down while there was, as yet, no shadow over his path to tell of coming night. Honoured and beloved he was, and a blessing to thousands. Doubtless, in her heart, she said, "Would God I had died for thee!" but she remembered whose hand had inflicted the blow, and bowed and worshipped in silence and resignation. The following note was written to me, shortly after this event. It gives a passing glimpse of her state of feeling:—

"*Norwich*, 1*st mo.*, 29*th*, 1847.

"My dear Cecilia,—

. . . . "Thanks for thy kind inquiries, and still more for thy graphic description of the Cambridge show. It made me long to have been there. Thy account of the behaviour of the students carried me back to 1810, when I was at Oxford, at Lord Grenville's installation, and was excessively amused by the thundering and hissing of the students for some time; but the third day I grew tired of the noise. The proctors *there* were treated, one excepted, with great indignity. How I did rejoice in the first wrangler's success,

when I found he was a boy of obscure birth, educated by a benevolent individual, on whom he had no claims; and that he had been enabled to repay his benefactor!

"The dear bishop came yesterday afternoon, and was so kind and sympathizing. I *could* see him, for I was in my drawing-room again. My doctors are just gone. I hope I am improving, and expect to be allowed to get out next week, to see my aunt. But I shall be slow in returning my calls, and slower still in paying any visits. I do so *dread* the convincing myself, when I go out, that there is one whom, if I look for, I shall never, *never* find. . . But no more of that, I can't bear it.

"Believe me, thy attached friend,

"A. Opie."

Her grief did not, however, prevent her taking an active interest in the sorrows and sufferings of others. She was engaged in collecting for the relief of the poor Irish, and says:—"Oh, the horrible state of things in that country! Without our aid, they say, the poor people must perish. I am collecting for the Ladies' Committee at Dunmanaway, near Cork; a very distressed district, but small, and with few rich residents in it; and therefore the more needing help. I let no day pass without having, in the course of it, begged of some one. I take sixpence, or one shilling, with thanks, and I have accepted twopence from a little boy, who sent

it to me, because he knew what it was to be hungry himself. I have a humble agent at work to procure small sums, as my Irish ladies advise; and have a little money still in hand, which I hope to make more. We shall one day, perhaps, know scenes here like those in Ireland, and trials which *wealth* cannot help us to avoid or remove; but 'shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"

In the spring of this year Mrs. Opie was sufficiently recovered in health to pay her usual visit to Cromer. While there, she received the tidings of Dr. Chalmers' death; she wrote home, requesting to have the lines she had addressed to him in 1833 sent to her; and acknowledged the receipt of them in the following letter:—

"*To Mrs. Brightwell.*

"*Cromer, 6th mo., 5th,* 1847.

"My dear Friend,—

". . . . . I do not exactly know to whom I was indebted for the great kindness of copying for me my lines to dear Dr. C., but perhaps the same pen (it was thine, I think) would do me the same favour again; I am very desirous of having them, though ashamed of troubling thee. Poor dear man! on his way home to Edinburgh, he would not be easy without going to Darlington to see dear J. J. Gurney's daughter once more.

In his letter to me, he said that he hoped one day 'to see him *before the throne*,' or words to that effect. How soon, as I trust, the hope has been fulfilled.

"I am here, in a lovely lodging; my sitting-room has a bay-window, that looks *on* the sea, and *up* the shore, and on the jetty and the breakwater. I am at Randall's bath-house, and the hot-bath is delightful indeed. I think I am better, in spite of visitors; I have had eleven callers already, since ten o'clock.

"When I came, the sea was beautiful; yesterday, it was awful to look at. The white horses, the cavalry of the sea, were all out yesterday. Alas! their appearance was signalized by death. A boat was capsized, and a poor old man drowned, in sight, almost, of my window. At twilight I looked on the sea, which appeared terribly sublime. The hue grew darker and darker, as the mass of waters seemed sloping *upwards* as they went, till they looked like a dark mountain, bounding forth to engulf us; and I retreated—almost in fear. I hope, this evening, to see the sun set from the western cliff. How beautiful, in my eyes, were the hedges, as I came; such a profusion of germander, bright red bachelors' buttons, the golden furze and broom, in luxuriant blossom; and the may, only too much laden with flowers. Farewell. With love to thy spouse and bairn, thy attached friend,

"A. Opie."

Mrs. Opie returned from Cromer in the middle of June; in her notes I find the following entries: —"I am come home, not the better for the sea and baths, though much so in mind and feelings for the great attentions and kindnesses I received. A lame old woman is, however, best at home. Poor dear Dr. Chalmers! he passed four or five as happy days as he *could* pass with the daughter of J. J.; he could not rest without going, and was *so* charming: he died two days after. He left Darlington well; but went home, as it proved, to die. He was every day, when there, going to write to me, and I was just about to write to him, from Cromer, when he died."

"(6th mo., 19th.) I have been reading the Life of Sarah Martin. It made me shed many tears, from the sense of her superior virtue, and of my own inferiority. What an example she was, and how illustrative her life, of what that of a humble but real and confiding Christian should be! and her end was one of intense bodily suffering; as Pope says of some one—

> "'Heaven, as its purest gold, by torture tried,—
> The saint sustain'd it, but the *woman* died.'

W. Allen's admirable Life I have read quite through, with delight and, I hope, instruction."

Mrs. Opie visited her friends at Brooke in the following month; and writing shortly after to Miss Gurney, said:—" . . . I received, before I went

to Brooke, a very valuable present from Lord Brougham, which he had ordered to be sent two months ago, and I expected. It arrived at last, and is a folio volume, two nails thick, containing the evidence before the select committee of the House of Lords, appointed to inquire into the execution of the criminal law, especially respecting juvenile offenders and transportation. It interests me, and I dare say I shall read it through . . . . .

"My head is full of this horrible, most horrible of murders at Paris. I am glad I do not know the parties concerned. I earnestly hope that, if he must die, he will be allowed no privileges on account of his rank; the people would not bear it, and the Most High 'is no respecter of persons.'

"If my aunt's health allow, I intend to go to the Birkbecks' ere long, for a few days; but yesterday I conceived an alarm concerning her, poor dear, and I must talk to her medical man on the subject."

This alarm proved to be well grounded; Mrs. E. Alderson sank gradually, and at length expired, at a very advanced age, on the 10th of January, 1848.

The time had now come, when Mrs. Opie was able to carry into effect an intention she had long entertained. She felt very desirous to have a house of her own; it had become, indeed, necessary to her comfort; and after long consideration, at length she fixed upon the house on Castle

Meadow, which she inhabited during the remainder of her life. Before removing, or rather preparatory to doing so, she went up to London to spend some months there, according to her old usage. Four years had elapsed since she visited the metropolis, and the present occasion proved one of much enjoyment. She bade adieu to Lady's-lane on the 6th of April, and journeyed to town, availing herself there of the cordial invitations given her by her friends in Russell-square and Langham-place. Much occurred, during her stay, to interest and cheer her, of which she wrote accounts to her friends at home. She made short excursions to Hampstead, Hornsey, Wandsworth, and Tottenham, and went to hear the speeches at Harrow. She also attended all the Friends' Meetings, and was present as well at the Missionary and Bible Meetings, in all which she took a lively interest. Her letters show that she still retained much of her wonted energy, and interested herself in the stirring events going on around her.

The following is selected from among others, written at this time, as being of the most general interest:—

"*To Thomas Brightwell.*

"*Russell-square, 5th mo., 22nd,* 1848.

"My dear Friend,—

"I have been intending to write to thee for some time past, but was prevented. My career

has been a very pleasant one, spite of occasionally great lameness; but though I always limp, I am not always in pain, and I find it possible to bear with patience the ill which can't, I fear, be ever cured.

"I will, as briefly as possible, give thee a sketch of my goings on. A dinner at Lord Denman's was my pleasantest. I met Mr. Justice Erle, the new judge, and Mr. Warren, the author of "Ten Thousand a Year." These gentlemen and my host talked across the table, and most pleasant were the dinner hours, as well as those which succeeded. . . . . More of this when we meet, if I am permitted to return in health and safety.

"The next prosperity was, my going to a private view at the Society of Arts and Sciences, in the Adelphi, where Barry's pictures were lighted up, and the wonderful and beautiful specimens of new English arts and manufactures exhibited to those able and willing to purchase; and it was to be that unusual thing, an evening private view beginning at ten o'clock. My kind friend, Lady C. B., gave me a ticket, and, after *hours* at the Bible Meeting and a dinner at Baron Alderson's, I went to the place of rendezvous. I was the first person there; so that I could survey all the lovely things and exquisite pictures, long and well known to me, before any one came; but the room filled at length, and the Bishop of Norwich told me he never saw

more of the nobility assembled. I saw many old acquaintances, and made many new.

"Last 6th day (yesterday week) I dined at Sir J. Boileau's; I met Guizot, the American ambassador, and our bishop. After dinner, we all went to the Royal Institution, to hear a lecture on the Greek Anthology, by Mr. Newton. Lady C. B. and I sat on a form near the lecturer; in front of him was another chair for the president, the Duke of Northumberland; and on a chair, placed on his right hand, was Guizot; on his left, the American ambassador; *par conséquent*, we conceived this was meant as a compliment to Guizot, who seems much noticed.

"Now, to finish with my visit at Claremont. The ex-queen fixed the day and hour by Madame de Montjoye, her lady. I hired a clarence and two horses, and borrowed J. Bell's servant, and, in a broiling day, set off on my fifteen miles' journey. Madame de Montjoye came to me first, and said the Queen would soon come to me. She did, and I cannot express my feeling, when I thought of the change in her position since we met. I could scarcely speak, while she pressed my hands most affectionately, and called me, '*Ma chère bonne Opie, que vous êtes bonne de venir me voir!*' At last she sat, and desired I would do the same. . . . After half-an-hour, she rose and said she was very sorry to go, but she must, because she had letters to write, which were to go to Paris that morning

again she took my hands, and pressed them to her heart, I not being able to speak, from rising tears. At length I got out that '*Les paroles me manquaient, et que je ne pouvais pas exprimer les sentiments que j'éprouvais;*' and I almost wished to kiss as well as press the hand I held. Madame de Montjoye gave me her arm to the other room, and we parted most cordially. . . . . .

"Thy attached friend,

"A. OPIE."

Mrs. Opie's stay in London was cut short by her increasing indisposition. She had prepared to go on a visit to Mr. S. Gurney, when, on the 7th of July, she had a severe access of her disorder and Sir B. Brodie recommending rest and quiet, after a week's nursing, she returned to Norwich.

CHAPTER IX.

Returning from London on the 14th June, 1848, Mrs. Opie took possession of her new house on the Castle Meadow. She looked back with pleasure upon the time she had passed in town, and said, "Never, indeed, did I have a more gratifying reception than I met with from all my friends, of different ranks, this time of my being there." Fortunately, her choice of an abode proved satisfactory; she thoroughly liked it from the first, and conceived the happy idea, that Dr. Alderson would have been pleased with it; "for," she said, "he would have enjoyed this lively scene, and he often wished to have a house in this locality." When she had become quite settled in it, she wrote:

. . . . "I am every day more charmed with my new house and home. I feel it a very desirable house to die in—that is, to be ill in—'a pleasant cradle for reposing age;' and I do so love to look at my noble trees, and my castle turrets rising above them; and when the leaves fall off, I shall still have the pleasure of seeing the green and grassy mound of the castle. From one of the windows of my drawing-room I see the woods and

rising grounds of Thorpe. I neither see nor hear the cattle on market days; and I am quite happy in my choice, and deeply thankful that 'the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;' indeed, I have no *désagréments* at all, that I am conscious of, in my new abode."

In the month of October she made a short stay at Lowestoft; but the fatigue brought on a return of her malady, and in one of her letters she wrote: —"I came from Lowestoft apparently well, but soon became ill, and was obliged to send for Dr. Hull, who was at first alarmed at my symptoms; but I was not, as he kept his fears to himself. My sufferings were great indeed, and I never was so conscious of his judgment as while observing the truly efficacious manner in which he treated me. I rallied immediately, and was able, with his leave, to go to Sir J. Boileau's to stay two days and nights. I was charmed with M. Guizot, who was one of the guests. His manners are very simple, and he played at '*jeux de société*' with us *young* people at night, and enjoyed it as much as we did. It is, indeed, a great favour to be permitted still to enjoy life so much as I do, in company; but it is a far greater one to be able to enjoy equally my lonely hours. . . . . How fearful is the state of things on the Continent, and who knows what the result will be? But I read the 46th Psalm, and remember who reigneth, and I trust in Him, and am at peace." . . . . .

Shortly after, referring to the fearful crimes which were committed during that autumn, she says:—

"I heard, at that blessed City Mission Meeting which I attended the other evening, that our county is reckoned one of the worst for crime and ignorance; and now comes that murder by wholesale at Stanfield; indeed, every week I read of two or three murders and other atrocities."

Mrs. Opie appears to have sympathized, to some extent, with the opinion that there is an injurious tendency in the great publicity at present given to crime; and the disposition to dwell upon its details, so as to possess the minds of the people with all its horrors. She read the daily papers, in which the same case is repeatedly brought to notice week after week, and the particulars of everything connected with the offence minutely given; and became possessed with an idea that murders and horrors were multiplied in proportion to the increased notoriety given them.

In the month of March, she went to visit Miss Gurney, and returned from Northrepps on the morning of the Lent Assizes, when the trial of the notorious Rush came on. She did not attend on that occasion, adhering to her constant determination, never to be present in the criminal court in a capital case; but, in one of her notes, she gives a lively picture of her feelings during the time the trial was going on:—

"I know not what to do to-day, except look at the Castle, and watch the crowd on the plain, and the people continually passing; few walking, but most running, as if too much excited to do otherwise. Rush is on his defence. . . . I dread to hear the verdict, and yet I wish all was over." The evening of the 2nd day:—"On my castle turrets, to the west, the sun set gloriously this evening, converting it into a mass of red granite; and, while I write, the moon is shining into my room, looking tranquillity. But what is passing within those castle walls? A man, fierce as a tiger, is struggling for life at the awful bar of justice. . . . . What hundreds are passing to and fro, and what various sounds I hear! now children and boys laughing and shouting; then, men, congregated under my windows, and talking; but always, within those walls, *I* see that wretched man, writhing in mental agony, and against what I fancy he now *believes* inevitable doom."

In the summer assizes Mrs. Opie was in her usual place in court, and with how much lively interest she watched the proceedings is evident in the following letter, which she wrote to me—I being in Leicestershire at that time.

"*Castle Meadow, 8th mo., 4th*, 1849.

"Well, C. L., how art thou now? And so thou hast trodden where Robin Hood did. He was one of my heroes when I was young; and, at sixteen,

when driving through Sherwood Forest, I insisted on getting out, to walk through it, and tread where he and his merry men had trodden. Thy papa has been very kind to me, and saw me safe home when I walked two evenings together from the Shirehall, where I was from nine to six on the sixth day, and from nine to nine on the following day; that is, twelve hours on Saturday, and without refreshment of any kind, save two gingerbread cakes; but I wanted nothing, so completely did mind conquer matter. It was *one* cause only, which lasted from twelve on Friday to six that evening; and the next day, from nine to nine; and so interesting it was to me, my attention never flagged a minute, and when I got home I was quite as able and bright as when I went into court. It was Lord W. Poulett's action against our railway company for damage done to his property and his tenants by the fire emitted from the train. I never saw a clearer case proved. I had no bias either way; if I had any leaning, it was to the Norwich persons, the defendants; but I felt sure the verdict was a just one. It was for the plaintiff. The fire may be kept in, but they must take more trouble, and go to more expense; and I believe this action will save property, if not *lives*. B. spoke admirably, and the judge was excellent also. I assure thee, this calling up of all my energies has done me great good. Except in my lameness, I am as well as ever I was in my

life; and, at the palace the other evening, I walked across the room to my fly, having hold of A. S., and did not limp. It is, to my feelings, so cold a day that I am sitting by a large fire in my smaller drawing-room. . . . There, my letter is longer than thine, and I have already written four besides this, so hasten to conclude.

"Thine faithfully and affectionately,

"A. Opie."

In August, Mrs. Opie spent a week in Cambridgeshire, visiting some kind friends at Melbourne Bury, and returning home shortly before the lamented death of Bishop Stanley. This was a grief which, as she herself expressed it, cast a shadow over the remainder of her days, and to which she could never refer without deep emotion. How many hearts grieved when the solemn sound of the bell announced to the inhabitants of the city this melancholy event! Every one felt that it told of a general loss, and that a good and holy man had been taken from among them; and when, in compliance with the wish of the honoured and beloved prelate, his remains were brought to rest in that cathedral, where his voice had so often been heard, there was a mournful satisfaction in the conviction that his heart had loved the people for whom he had laboured with an unfailing charity and with a ceaseless zeal. Several references are made, in Mrs. Opie's notes, to this

event. At the time it happened, she was surrounded by a large circle of her relatives; and while they remained with her, she said, "I was taken from myself; but now regret is uppermost again. How I feel for the dear bereaved ones!" Again, she says, (9th mo., 20th) . . . . "I cannot reconcile myself to this great loss to me; and, as yet, can scarcely believe I am awake, and not in a delirium. I can't believe he can be gone for ever. He came to take leave of me, and I am recalling all his looks and words. I followed him to the top of the stairs; he said he was to be gone a month, and that he wanted *rest;*—and I would not call him back, if I could; he was weary, and is gone to his rest—the rest of the people of God."

In the course of this autumn, Mrs. Opie paid several short visits to her friends in the neighbourhood of Norwich; the last of which was to Keswick Hall. On her return home, she was attacked with a severe inflammation of the right eye, which caused her much pain, and compelled her to sit in a darkened room. This confinement was trying in many respects to her, but her usual cheerfulness and kindly response to every endeavour to enliven her hours, were pleasing and instructive, and still more endeared her to the hearts of those who loved her. There was nothing of the selfishness and irritation of age betrayed in her words or looks; but the same delighted interest in the welfare of others was still evident, accompanied by a loving

spirit of thankfulness for all kindness shown to herself.

The spring, with its cheering influences, relieved her indisposition, and she was able to pay her usual visit to Northrepps in the month of April, returning home on the 16th of May. At the Midsummer assizes, Baron Alderson and Mr. Justice Patteson being on the Norfolk circuit, Mrs. Opie went into court, accompanied by some of her relatives; and not being able to walk, in consequence of her increased lameness, was carried thither in a sedan chair. It was her last visit to that scene which for so many years she had been wont to frequent. She did not neglect, on this occasion, to make her usual offering of a bouquet to the judge.

In the month of September she attended the annual meeting of the Bible Society, in St. Andrew's Hall; and in November she was present at that of the City Mission. These meetings cheered her spirits, and she "closed another year very happily."

In 1851, after a visit at Keswick, Mrs. Opie, on the 7th of May, travelled to London, and took up her residence with her friends in Russell-square. During her stay, she attended several meetings at Devonshire House and Westminster meeting, and paid numerous visits to her friends and acquaintances. She felt that it was her *last* visit, and seemed desirous to take a farewell look at all her old haunts. She would go to the various shops she had been wont to frequent, and at every

turn was met by some one who recognized and welcomed her. She was greatly interested, too, in visiting the Great Exhibition, being among the few privileged persons who, from age or infirmity, requiring chairs, had the *entrée* an hour before the usual time. After the public were admitted, she remained, sitting in the transept an hour, enjoying the sight of the many hundreds who rushed in, among whom were several of the Society of Friends, and others known to her, who gathered around her chair, and cordially greeted her.

Mrs. Opie left Russell-square on the 19th of June, for Ham House (Mr. S. Gurney's), where she stayed two days. Her homeward journey was rendered uncomfortable by some derangement of the railway engine, so that they were twice stopped on the road, and had to change carriages. On arriving safely at home, she expressed her gratitude for the mercies she had enjoyed during this journey, and added, "These alarms have been warnings to me that, in my infirm state, I must not venture on the line again. So, railway, farewell!"

During the course of the autumn, numerous short visits were paid to different friends in the neighbourhood of Norwich; and although suffering much, and almost constantly, from pain, she was bright and cheerful; but the afflictions and bereavements of those she loved awakened her sympathy, and drew from her this expression of her feeling:—"It is a heavy trial to witness the sorrows of others, and to

be called on to survive so many dear ones, younger than one's-self. It has been my fate to do, and seems likely to continue so to be; but still I think and feel that He doeth all things well, and I hope to be always able to say with the patriarch, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Mrs. Opie attended, for the last time, the annual meeting of the Bible Society in St. Andrew's Hall, in the month of September. She says:—"I had been nursing for it two days, and was so glad to be able to go. I did so enjoy it, in spite of certain reminiscences of 'auld lang syne.' The bishop's speech was charming and judicious, and, to me, so affecting, that it brought me to tears. He paid a just and touching tribute to the memory of Andrew Brandram. Last year, he (A. B.) came to me, while I was waiting for my carriage, and I congratulated him on his good looks; he looked ten years younger than when I saw him last: and there was I yesterday, years older than himself, sitting there, in health, though not with my once active limbs; and *he* was in his grave."

In November, her final visit to Northrepps Cottage was paid. On the 2nd of January following (1852), she was attacked with rheumatic gout in her feet, which confined her to her bed two months, and never afterwards entirely left her. The following note, written to Miss Gurney shortly after this time, shows her happy resignation and cheerful spirit amid increasing infirmities:—

"*Castle Meadow*, 3*rd mo.*, 5*th*, 1852.

"My dearest Anna,

"I was very sorry not to be able to see R—— yesterday, but I was denied to every one while my visitor was with me, as I had much to say to her. The cold of this day has kept me in bed, and one of my feet has been very painful. How many things I want to say to thee, but I can't say them; but I am very thankful for what I can do, and I do not repine at what I can't do; and life flies only too fast. I do not see, at present, any chance of my speedy recovery; but life has still its charms. I am glad to have an excuse for lying in bed all day; it is so troublesome to move from bed to chair, and thence to sofa. . . . .

"I am ever thine most affectionately,

"A. Opie."

A few passages, selected from her notes, will be read with pleasure:—"(4th mo., 18th). My prisms are, to-day, quite in their glory; the atmosphere must be very clear, for the radiance is brighter than I ever saw it before. Surely, the mansions in heaven must be draped with such unparalleled colours!" "(5th mo., 4th.) Oh! Captain Gardiner and his crew! how I have cried over their deaths, and yet how enviable was the state of their minds; how meek and entire their resignation; how blessed their entrance into their Redeemer's kingdom, and

their awaiting welcome there! I have read it through three times, as though fascinated." "(5th mo., 18th.) No one, surely, ever had so many kind friends as I have. I can truly say, that I have every alleviation of my suffering that I can have, and have every comfort that I desire, and I do not want any nursing but that I have. Mine has been a lonely lot latterly, but I have never felt it painfully so; and I believe the happiest persons are those who have the fewest wants. The great I AM is more even-handed than we think him."

In the month of September, Mrs. Opie once more repaired to Cromer. She remained there for a fortnight, and had two rooms on the ground floor of the house in which she lodged, where she could lie in bed, and watch the billows as they rolled. Numerous friends flocked about her; amongst them some whose daily visits cheered her, and the various little kindnesses she received, though small in themselves, were yet valued as tokens of love, and were mentioned with grateful remembrance. Reaching home in safety, she wrote, shortly after her return, to Miss Gurney.

"*9th mo.*, 26*th*, 1852.

"DEAREST ANNA,

"I had a pleasant journey home, arriving comfortably at my own door; but the passage upstairs, which I made in my basket-chair, was not quite so agreeable. . . . It grieves my heart to

think that I am not any nearer at present than I was, to get to the Bible meeting and my quarterly meeting; but I am not up to the exertions necessary. It is heart-breaking, almost, to me, to miss a Bible meeting. This is the *first* I ever omitted, and I did not with any certainty look forward to another. I am able to say, although I give it up most unwillingly, 'His will be done!' I am come home with a cold; but nothing to make me regret one hour spent at Cromer. I had so many dear friends to see, and some new ones to welcome, and am returned more enamoured of Cromer than ever. Farewell. I must now lie down and sleep.

"Thy ever affectionate

"A. Opie."

Three months later she wrote:—"I shall probably never be able to go out again; and the idea of being confined to my bed is anything but disagreeable. What a mercy this is! Thankfully, as well as reverently, I can repeat, 'His mercies are new every morning.' I must, however, own, that being unable to go to meeting is a continually recurring trial; but I hope by spring, if I live so long, I may have contrived a way to get there again: all I ask is, to be made more and more resigned to the Divine will, whatever it may be."

During the course of the summer, many of Mrs. Opie's relatives visited her; their presence seemed

greatly to cheer and comfort her, and she frequently spoke of the delight it gave her to see them all. The strong feeling of family attachment which characterized her through life, was retained to the last. She also evinced the deepest sympathy with her beloved cousin, Lady Milman, whom she knew to be dying, and who, in fact, survived her but a very short time, constantly inquiring for her, and suggesting anything which occurred to her mind, as likely to contribute to her comfort; expressing also her joy, that the confidence of this dear relative was, like her own, placed on the blessed promises of the gospel, and thus secure for eternity. The departure of the lamented William Forster to America, on a mission in behalf of the slave, was a great trial to her; he had been her friend and counsellor—one to whom she looked for help and support, and from whose lips she had drunk in truth and wisdom. It was his preaching which first led her to attend the meetings of Friends, and she rejoiced in the fond hope that the intercourse she had so long enjoyed with him would be permitted her even to the end of life; but when she saw him on the eve of departure, she felt that she should "see his face no more," and with a heavy heart she wrote:—"(7th mo., 28th.) Dearest W. Forster going away, not to return again, I fear, till I am no more. I shall not, however, own this to him. How very much I feel the return of this season this year! The dead

have been more present with me than the living, but that is very natural. I am writing in bed—the place, now, I love best. Alas! to the house of the Lord I cannot go, and that is indeed an evil."

On the 21st of October, Mrs. Opie appeared much as usual: during that morning she received several friends, and was highly interested by a visit from Lieutenant Cresswell, who had recently returned to England with despatches, bringing news of the discovery of the north-west passage, though not, alas! of the finding of Sir John Franklin. His communications excited her lively sympathy, and, as the grandson of Mrs. Fry, his presence alone sufficed to awaken the slumbering remembrances of the past. The following day she was evidently somewhat fatigued, although able to write several short notes; in one of them, addressed to Miss Gurney, she speaks with pleasure of seeing some friends who had dined at her house, and attended the Bible meeting; and she concludes, "I could not accompany them; nor can I, perhaps, expect to go out again. Well! all good and all evil here will soon be over with me now. I am abundantly thankful for everything; for I feel that 'His mercies are new every morning.' How I wish thou and dear Lady Buxton could have been my guests yesterday! It was really a very enjoyable time, and the only drawback was, my being unable to go to the meetings, and to dine below stairs."

The next day was Sunday: early in the morning

she became very restless and unwell; and her own maid, perceiving symptoms unusual with her mistress, sent immediately for Dr. Hull, who desired that she might be kept perfectly quiet.

I had been frequently in the habit, since Mrs. Opie's confinement to the house, of spending an hour with her on Sunday morning, when there was not the usual influx of visitors, and she seemed to enjoy having a quiet chat. That day I called as usual, but the mandate of the doctor was communicated to me, and, of course, obeyed. It was with a strange feeling of disquiet that I turned away from the door-step, and as I slowly bent my course homewards, I reflected over the incidents of the past few months. Yes; there had certainly been some tokens of enfeebled powers—a partial failure of memory—an occasional loss in the thread of her conversation, and at times an inability to express clearly her meaning. Once or twice, too, an ominous sentence had been dropped that startled her friends: "When I am gone,"—"I feel I shall not be here long." To her old friend, the Rev. H—— T——, she had said, when he was about to leave her, "Don't be long before you come again, for I am on the wing;" and in reply to his question, "Do you really mean that?" she said, after a moment's hesitation, "Yes, yes! I *do*." All these slight indications of evil now recurred to my mind; but still there were counterbalancing recollections. Her aunt had lived more than

ninety years, and Mrs. Opie was so cheerful and bright, her carriage so erect, her general bearing so animated, and she looked so much as she had long done, though somewhat more pallid, that, after all, these occasional symptoms were probably merely the inevitable results of advancing age, and her foreboding expressions the effects of confinement and seclusion. So whispered Hope, and I put aside the thought of alarm, and did not realize that the end was at hand.

On the evening of that Sunday a message was sent from her medical attendant, to the effect that she was very ill—might not perhaps survive many hours; and as she had desired, in case of any sudden attack of illness, that "her friend, Thomas Brightwell," should be sent for, he had felt it to be his duty to inform him of her condition. In a few hours, however, the more alarming symptoms subsided, and the gout appeared externally, and fixed itself in the right heel.

Mrs. Opie survived nearly six weeks from that day, being unable to leave her bed, and suffering greatly. At first there was much of her usual cheerfulness and buoyancy of spirit about her, and she evidently entertained no apprehension of the fatal nature of the attack. She evinced an interest in the events occurring around her, and frequently made inquiries and observations that showed her sympathies were lively, and her recollection unimpaired. Her constant patience and cheerful en-

durance under suffering were truly exemplary. No murmuring word or look did she suffer to escape her; on the contrary, when her pain was alluded to, and compassionated, she gently made answer, "I think more of my mercies than of my trials." She had learned, like the apostle Paul, in everything to give thanks, and to draw from tribulation itself the sweet blessing of patient hope.

I am reminded, in thus speaking, of her own lines, written some time previous to her last illness, entitled "Thanksgiving," and, as they are very illustrative of her feeling, and afford a pleasing specimen of her religious poetry, I give them here:—

THANKSGIVING.

"There's not a leaf within the bower,
There's not a bird upon the tree,
There's not a dewdrop on the flower,
But bears the impress, Lord, of thee.

"Thy hand the varied leaf design'd,
And gave the bird its thrilling tone;
Thy power the dewdrop's tints combined,
Till like a diamond's blaze they shone.

"Yes, dewdrops, leaves, and buds, and all,
The smallest, like the greatest things,—
The sea's vast space, the earth's wide ball,
Alike proclaim thee King of kings.

"But man alone to bounteous heaven
Thanksgiving's conscious strains can raise;
To favour'd man alone 'tis given
To join the angelic choir in praise."

During the last three or four weeks of her life she became greatly worse; her weakness increased, she took but little nourishment, and suffered much distressing pain in the hip and in the heel. Throughout this trying season, her kind, gentle, and watchful friend, Mary Brown, remained in constant and unwearying attendance beside her, ministering to her wants, and answering the numerous inquiries, personal and epistolary, of her friends.

The frequent presence and attention of her cousin, the Rev. R. Alderson, was another great comfort to Mrs. Opie; happily, he was able to give much of his time to her, and she missed him when he was absent, and anxiously inquired when he would return. A great satisfaction it was to him, doubtless, to render these last and important services to his honoured relative.

On more than one occasion she had been heard to express the hope that her friend, Wm. Forster, would be with her during her last hours; but this wish was not granted her. Other Christian friends paid her visits of religious instruction and consolation, which afforded her comfort and assistance; but soothing as are the offices of friendship, and precious the prayers of the righteous under such circumstances, how unavailing is all human ministration when heart and flesh are failing! It is *then* the soul realizes its independence, and the inefficiency of earthly help, and feels with whom it has to do, and knows that for itself, and alone, it must

stand in the presence of the Holy One. And so it was in this instance. Alone, in the night season, her voice was heard in supplication, pouring out the desires of her spirit to her Redeemer. The pathetic utterances of resignation, amidst pain and anguish, were audible to those who watched beside her couch. "What am I," she said, thinking aloud, "that I should expect to escape suffering? This, also, is meant for my good." Often, too, she was heard repeating to herself texts of Scripture and hymns; and on more than one occasion she called for her Bible, and for Wesley's Hymn Book (her much-used copy of which, now in my possession, is full of her marks, and turned down at her favourite hymns), and sitting up in her bed, read aloud to her maids, as it had been her constant habit to do.

Mrs. Opie often spoke during her illness of the kindness of her friends, and evinced the most tender interest in them; weeping, as she mentioned the proofs of their affectionate remembrance, and sending touching messages in reply to their inquiries. "Tell them," she said, "I have suffered great pain; but I think on Him who suffered for me."—"Say that I am trusting in my Saviour; and ask them to pray for me." And, when told by one of those who visited her, that many prayers were offered for her, she said (and a tear glistened in her eye), "It were worth while to be ill, to have the prayers of our friends."

Latterly, there was a striking change in her personal appearance. So completely was her countenance altered, that it would have been impossible for any one, even of those who knew her best, to recognize her. The only vestige remaining of her former looks, was a peculiar uplifting of the eye, accompanied by a slight shake of the head. Her articulation also became so imperfect, that it was very difficult to distinguish what she said; and for very weakness, her head lay, bent sideways, apparently powerless, on the cushion. Her debility now visibly and rapidly increased. She refused almost all nourishment, and seemed to crave no other refreshment than "cold water," for which she frequently called. It was evident that her end was approaching.

On the last Sunday of Mrs. Opie's life (the 27th November) I went, accompanied by my father, to pay a farewell visit to the bedside of our dying friend. She lay propped up on pillows and cushions, extremely feeble, but perfectly clear in her intellect, calm, and composed. She had become conscious of her danger, and anticipated her approaching departure. This she intimated by saying, "The last few days I have been preparing to go."* In reply to my inquiry what she meant to

* The preparation to which she alluded, had reference to some small directions she had dictated to her maid, a few evenings before, to be communicated to her executor; at the close of which she said, "I should have liked to give little remembrances to all my friends, and have taken leave of them; but I have done the best I can."

convey by these words, she said, "Why to die, child, to be sure!"—"You have long been prepared to die, we hope."—"I hope so indeed," she replied; "there is only *one* way."

There she lay, helpless, dying, alone. Could all those whom she had served and loved have been permitted to gather around her couch, what a cloud of witnesses, circle within circle, had thronged that small chamber with looks of tender sympathy! Impelled by some such thought, I said, as I bent over her—"It is a great thing to be loved as you are loved. How many ask anxiously for tidings of you!" She raised her eyes to mine, with an expressive gesture, and appeared to wait a confirmation of this assurance, and looked satisfied on receiving it. She responded, too, with evident earnestness of feeling, to the expression of the hope that she was soon about to rejoin those dear ones, whom she had loved so well, and who were gone before.

From time to time she uttered a few broken words, and once said, with a piteous look, "I am very thirsty;" but her weakness was too great to allow of more than an occasional sentence. It was truly distressing to gaze upon her entirely changed countenance and exhausted frame, and to feel the sorrowful conviction that we were looking on her for the last time.

At the former part of her illness, Mrs. Opie's natural warmth of affection and lively interest in those whom she loved, seemed to induce her still

to cling to life; and while she said that, on looking back and contemplating the past, the time appeared to her long in the review, yet she intimated it would be sweet to live a little longer, if permitted to do so, "were it not still better to depart." But, as the end approached, there seemed to be a gradual giving up of her hold on the present life, and the few words she uttered showed that her thoughts were on heavenly things. On the night of the 30th, she said to her cousin, "All is peace;" and afterwards, when Mr. S. Gurney was present, she gave it as her dying testimony, "All is mercy."

During the last five days of existence, her sufferings were protracted and severe. Hers were "the groans, and pains, and dying strife" of a mortal conflict. But her faith and patience failed not; and at length the angel-messenger came, and she was released.

At midnight, on Friday, the 2nd of December, 1853, Amelia Opie breathed her last.

CONCLUSION.

It appears to me that, in closing these pages, I cannot do better than give my readers the testimony of one who long knew and deeply revered her of whom they speak. Her friend and executor, Mr. Brightwell, in his Preface to the "Memorials of the Life of A. Opie," says:—

"My acquaintance with the subject of these memoirs commenced nearly forty years ago; and well do I remember the first impressions made on me by her frank and open manner, the charm of her fine and animated countenance, her artless cheerfulness and benevolence, and the extraordinary powers of her conversation. But it was not till the time of Dr. Alderson's last illness that my acquaintance with Mrs. Opie ripened into confidential friendship. From that period, to the time of her decease, I had the happiness to enjoy much of her society, and to hear her recollections of her earlier days, and her graphic descriptions of the scenes and characters which had been the subjects of interest to her during the course of her long

life; and she subsequently often read to me a large portion of the correspondence she continued to maintain. Gifted with an extraordinary memory and reverence for truth, extending even to the minutest details, a disposition to look at the best side of everything and everybody, and with almost dramatic power in the exhibition of character and manners, Mrs. Opie, when she entered into any details of her former life, painted the whole scene with such truthfulness and power, as to make it live before her hearers, and fix it in their memory.

"The great leading feature of her character was pure Christian benevolence—charity in its highest sense. None who knew her could fail to observe this. Unwearied in her efforts to relieve the distresses of others, and limited in her own means, she was almost ingenious in some of the methods she devised for doing so. Her patience in dealing with the incessant importunities of persons who applied for her aid, was almost more than exemplary; but she found a blessing in doing good; and in a parting address, dictated, shortly before her death, to me and my daughter, she has not failed touchingly to urge the remembrance of the poor, so as to be blessed by them.

"Of her religion, the best evidences will be found in the experience of her latter years, and especially the short extracts from her private journals. These, speaking from the depths of her own heart, show how holily and humbly she walked

before her God, how strictly she called herself to account, day by day, and how firmly she relied on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as her hope in life and support in death. Mrs. Opie had no liking for religious controversy, and seemed to me always desirous of avoiding it. I believe she disliked dogmatic theology altogether. Her religion was the 'showing out of a good conversation her works with meekness of wisdom.' She ever deemed her union with 'the Friends' the happiest event of her life; and she did honour to her profession of their principles, by showing that they were not incompatible with good manners and refined taste. She met with some of them, who have always appeared to me to come the nearest to the standard of Christian perfection; *these* were her dearest friends on earth, and she is now with them, numbered among the blessed dead, who have died in the Lord, who have ceased from their labours, and their works do follow them."

. . . . . .

The 9th of December was the day appointed for the funeral of Mrs. Opie. She was interred in the Friends' burying-ground at the Gildencroft, in the same grave with her father. About two hundred persons, assembled in solemn silence, stood there to meditate; one voice alone was heard—that of a venerable friend, who uttered a few simple scriptural words. It seemed strange to miss from

among the sorrowing group around so many who had loved and honoured her. But the eye had only to glance around the green enclosure, and one was reminded that they lay *there*, beside and around her. Rich, indeed, is that small plot of ground. The good, the honoured, the lovely and beloved, lie there; some of the best of men and saints, whose prayers drew blessings down from heaven—awaiting the day when "the secrets of all hearts shall be made known." It is a hallowed spot, consecrated to holy memories.

Should any wanderer, at some future day, desire to visit the grave of Amelia Opie, he will find, at the extreme left of the ground, beneath an elm-tree that overshadows the wall, a small slab, bearing the names of James Alderson and Amelia Opie, with their ages and the dates of their deaths.

Among those present on this occasion, was one long and well known to Mrs. Opie, and of whom she has spoken in terms of high eulogy in one of her notes—Mr. Hodgkin, a minister of the Friends, who, addressing those around, invited them, after the interment had taken place, to accompany him to the meeting-house, where, a short time having been spent in silence and in prayer, he rose, and spoke, in words very pleasant and judicious, of the dear departed friend whom they had lost. He had known her, he said, from his own earlier days, and when she was very different from what she afterwards became. He believed that the ruling

GRAVE OF DR. ALDERSON AND MRS. OPIE,
IN THE FRIENDS' BURIAL-GROUND, NORWICH.

principle in her mind, and that which, being implanted there by Divine grace, had remained the dominant one in her soul, was the love of Christ; constrained by the sweet influence of which, she had been enabled to maintain much consistent Christian deportment, amidst snares and temptations of peculiar fascination for one endowed by nature, and trained by early habit, as she had been. Much more he added of a nature to impress his hearers with a deep sense of thankfulness for the Divine goodness, and to urge them to pursue with humble and pious zeal the path of Christian devotedness and obedience.

It may seem natural and desirable that a few words should be said touching the personal appearance of the subject of these memoirs during the latter period of her life. How difficult, and indeed impossible, it is to satisfy yourself when attempting to portray the form and features of those you know most intimately, and have been constantly in the habit of seeing! This you feel in trying to describe the members of your own family. In the mind's eye their image lives, it is true; but it is rather as a *consciousness;* something, as it were, that is interwoven with the secret and hidden ideas of your soul. In a degree this is the case with all those most familiar to you; and perhaps the reason is, that the whole idea of their personality has been formed by degrees, shade after shade, as the events of passing years have left their impress. Be

that as it may, the difficulty is known, and will be acknowledged. Yet, for the sake of strangers, rather than to assist the recollections of the friends of Mrs. Opie, I will attempt to give a slight sketch of her.

She was of about the standard height of woman: her hair was worn in waving folds in front, and behind it was seen through the cap, gathered into a braid; its colour was peculiar—betwixt flaxen and grey; it was unusually fine and delicate, and had a natural bend or wave; her figure was stout, her throat short; her carriage was invariably erect, and she bore her head rather thrown back, and with an air of dignity. Her countenance, in her later years, lost much of that fire which once irradiated it; but the expression was more pleasing, softer, more tender, and loving. Her eyes were especially charming: there was in them an ardour mingled with gentleness, that bespoke her true nature, and occasionally they were raised upwards, with a look most peculiar and expressive, when her sympathy was more than usually excited. Her complexion was fair, and the kindling blush mantled in her cheek, betraying any passing emotion, and reminding one of her description of one of her friends who "blushed like a girl to hear his own praises." Altogether, she attracted you, and you drew near to her, and liked to look into her face, and felt that old age, in her, was beautiful and comely.

Often, how often, have I, while listening to her lively anecdotes, and watching her animated countenance, drawn my chair closer and yet closer, and at length, slipping down, rested on one knee, in order the better to see her; and after bidding her farewell again and again, returned to the same position, and "stayed a little longer." How lively were her narratives, and with what minute touches she gave the details of the scene she was describing! What spirit and life did she impart to the portraits of those whom she admired! Certainly her conversation was superior to her writing: perhaps the charms of manner and voice aided to enhance the effect of her words.

The peculiar virtues and excellences of Mrs. Opie's character have been manifested, as it were, unconsciously, in the notes and diaries given in these pages; and it would be unbecoming, and is unnecessary, for me to enumerate them. Her foibles, too, are shown by her own hand; and happy they who have so few; happier still they, who exercise the same watchfulness against their easily besetting faults. In one of her earlier notes, she says, "My practice every night is, to examine all my actions, and sift all my motives during the day, in all that I have said or done. I make sad discoveries, by that means, of my own sinfulness; but I am truly thankful that this power has been given me, and lay my head on my pillow with much gratitude."

To many hearts the remembrance of Amelia Opie will long be dear, and the thought of her be cherished with tender regret. One of the ancients accounted the recollection of his departed friends among his solemn delights, not looking upon them as lost; for, he said, "The thought of them is sweet, and soothing to me. While I had them, I expected to lose them; and having lost them, I feel that I still have them;"—and not only may the Christian cherish delightful recollections of the friends he has lost, but it is the will of God, and part of the favour which he has promised to his servants, that the memory of the just shall be blessed.

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